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Sir Walter Scott

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THE WAVERLEY NOVELS

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IN FIFTY VOLUMES

VOLUME XXX

FRANK DAVIS
1913

Quentin finds the Countess Isabelle in the Oratory

QUENTIN DURWARD

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT

VOLUME II

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QUENTIN DURWARD

VOLUME II

QUENTIN DURWARD

CHAPTER XVIII

PALMISTRY

When many a merry tale and many a song
Cheer'd the rough road, we wish'd the rough road long.
The rough road, then, returning in a round,
Mock'd our enchanted steps, for all was fairy ground.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

By peep of day Quentin Durward had forsaken his little cell, had roused the sleepy grooms, and, with more than his wonted care, seen that everything was prepared for the day's journey. Girths and bridles, the horse furniture, and the shoes of the horses themselves, were carefully inspected with his own eyes, that there might be as little chance as possible of the occurrence of any of those casualties which, petty as they seem, often interrupt or disconcert travelling. The horses were also, under his own inspection, carefully fed, so as to render them fit for a long day's journey, or, if that should be necessary, for a hasty flight.

Quentin then betook himself to his own chamber, armed himself with unusual care, and belted on his sword with the feeling at once of approaching danger and of stern determination to dare it to the uttermost.

These generous feelings gave him a loftiness of step and a dignity of manner which the Ladies of Croye had not yet observed in him, though they had been highly

pleased and interested by the grace, yet naïveté, of his general behaviour and conversation, and the mixture of shrewd intelligence which naturally belonged to him, with the simplicity arising from his secluded education and distant country. He let them understand that it would be necessary that they should prepare for their journey this morning rather earlier than usual, and, accordingly, they left the convent immediately after a morning repast, for which, as well as the other hospitalities of the house, the ladies made acknowledgment by a donation to the altar befitting rather their rank than their appearance. But this excited no suspicion, as they were supposed to be Englishwomen; and the attribute of superior wealth attached at that time to the insular character as strongly as in our own day.

The prior blessed them as they mounted to depart, and congratulated Quentin on the absence of his heathen guide, 'for,' said the venerable man, 'better stumble in the path than be upheld by the arm of a thief or robber.'

Quentin was not quite of his opinion; for, dangerous as he knew the Bohemian to be, he thought he could use his services, and at the same time baffle his treasonable purpose, now that he saw clearly to what it tended. But his anxiety upon this subject was soon at an end, for the little cavalcade was not an hundred yards from the monastery and the village before Maugrabin joined it, riding as usual on his little active and wild-looking jennet. Their road led them along the side of the same brook where Quentin had overheard the mysterious conference of the preceding evening, and Hayraddin had not long rejoined them ere they passed under the very willow-tree which had afforded Durward the means of

concealment when he became an unsuspected hearer of what then passed betwixt that false guide and the lanzknecht.

The recollections which the spot brought back stirred Quentin to enter abruptly into conversation with his guide, whom hitherto he had scarce spoken to.

'Where hast thou found night-quarter, thou profane knave?' said the Scot.

'Your wisdom may guess by looking on my gaberdine,' answered the Bohemian, pointing to his dress, which was covered with the seeds of hay.

'A good hay-stack,' said Quentin, 'is a convenient bed for an astrologer, and a much better than a heathen scoffer at our blessed religion and its ministers ever deserves.'

'It suited my Klepper better than me, though,' said Hayraddin, patting his horse on the neck, 'for he had food and shelter at the same time. The old bald fools turned him loose, as if a wise man's horse could have infected with wit or sagacity a whole convent of asses. Lucky that Klepper knows my whistle, and follows me as truly as a hound, or we had never met again, and you in your turn might have whistled for a guide.'

'I have told thee more than once,' said Durward, sternly, 'to restrain thy ribaldry when thou chancest to be in worthy men's company, a thing, which, I believe, hath rarely happened to thee in thy life before now; and I promise thee that, did I hold thee as faithless a guide as I esteem thee a blasphemous and worthless caitiff, my Scottish dirk and thy heathenish heart had ere now been acquainted, although the doing such a deed were as ignoble as the sticking of a swine.'

'A wild boar is near akin to a sow,' said the Bohemian, without flinching from the sharp look with which Quentin regarded him or altering, in the slightest degree, the caustic indifference which he affected in his language; 'and many men,' he subjoined, 'find both pride, pleasure and profit in sticking them.'

Astonished at the man's ready confidence, and uncertain whether he did not know more of his own history and feelings than was pleasant for him to converse upon, Quentin broke off a conversation in which he had gained no advantage over Maugrabin, and fell back to his accustomed post beside the ladies.

We have already observed that a considerable degree of familiarity had begun to establish itself between them. The elder countess treated him, being once well assured of the nobility of his birth, like a favoured equal; and though her niece showed her regard to their protector less freely, yet, under every disadvantage of bashfulness and timidity, Quentin thought he could plainly perceive that his company and conversation were not by any means indifferent to her.

Nothing gives such life and soul to youthful gaiety as the consciousness that it is successfully received; and Quentin had accordingly, during the former period of their journey, amused his fair charge with the liveliness of his conversation, and the songs and tales of his country, the former of which he sung in his native language, while his efforts to render the latter into his foreign and imperfect French gave rise to a hundred little mistakes and errors of speech, as diverting as the narratives themselves. But on this anxious morning he rode beside the Ladies of Croye without any of his usual at-

tempts to amuse them, and they could not help observing his silence as something remarkable.

'Our young companion has seen a wolf,' said the Lady Hameline, alluding to an ancient superstition, 'and he has lost his tongue in consequence.' [1]

'To say that I had tracked a fox were nearer the mark,' thought Quentin, but gave the reply no utterance.

'Are you well, Seignior Quentin?' said the Countess Isabelle, in a tone of interest at which she herself blushed, while she felt that it was something more than the distance between them warranted.

'He hath sat up carousing with the jolly friars,' said the Lady Hameline. 'The Scots are like the Germans, who spend all their mirth over the *Rheinwein*, and bring only their staggering steps to the dance in the evening, and their aching heads to the ladies' bower in the morning.'

'Nay, gentle ladies,' said Quentin, 'I deserve not your reproach. The good friars were at their devotions almost all night; and for myself, my drink was barely a cup of their thinnest and most ordinary wine.'

'It is the badness of his fare that has put him out of humour,' said the Countess Isabelle. 'Cheer up, Seignior Quentin; and should we ever visit my ancient Castle of Bracquemont together, if I myself should stand your cupbearer and hand it to you, you shall have a generous cup of wine that the like never grew upon the vines of Hochheim or Johannisberg.'

'A glass of water, noble lady, from *your* hand —' Thus far did Quentin begin, but his voice trembled; and Isabelle continued, as if she had been insensible of the

[1] See Note 1.

tenderness of the accentuation upon the personal pronoun.

'The wine was stocked in the deep vault of Bracquemont by my great-grandfather, the Rhinegrave Godfrey,' said the Countess Isabelle.

'Who won the hand of her great-grandmother,' interjected the Lady Hameline, interrupting her niece, 'by proving himself the best son of chivalry, at the great tournament of Strasbourg. Ten knights were slain in the lists. But those days are over, and no one now thinks of encountering peril for the sake of honour, or to relieve distressed beauty.'

To this speech, which was made in the tone in which a modern beauty, whose charms are rather on the wane, may be heard to condemn the rudeness of the present age, Quentin took upon him to reply, 'That there was no lack of that chivalry which the Lady Hameline seemed to consider as extinct, and that, were it eclipsed everywhere else, it would still glow in the bosoms of the Scottish gentlemen.'

'Hear him!' said the Lady Hameline; 'he would have us believe that in his cold and bleak country still lives the noble fire which has decayed in France and Germany! The poor youth is like a Swiss mountaineer, mad with partiality to his native land; he will next tell us of the vines and olives of Scotland.'

'No, madam,' said Durward; 'of the wine and the oil of our mountains I can say little more than that our swords can compel these rich productions as tribute from our wealthier neighbours. But for the unblemished faith and unfaded honour of Scotland, I must now put to the proof how far you can repose trust in them, how-

ever mean the individual who can offer nothing more as a pledge of your safety.'

'You speak mysteriously — you know of some pressing and present danger,' said the Lady Hameline.

'I have read it in his eye for this hour past!' exclaimed the Lady Isabelle, clasping her hands. 'Sacred Virgin, what will become of us?'

'Nothing, I hope, but what you would desire,' answered Durward. 'And now I am compelled to ask — gentle ladies, can you trust me?'

'Trust you!' answered the Countess Hameline, 'certainly. But why the question? Or how far do you ask our confidence?'

'I, on my part,' said the Countess Isabelle, 'trust you implicitly and without condition. If you can deceive us, Quentin, I will no more look for truth, save in Heaven.'

'Gentle lady,' replied Durward, highly gratified, 'you do me but justice. My object is to alter our route, by proceeding directly by the left bank of the Maes to Liege, instead of crossing at Namur. This differs from the order assigned by King Louis and the instructions given to the guide. But I heard news in the monastery of marauders on the right bank of the Maes, and of the march of Burgundian soldiers to suppress them. Both circumstances alarm me for your safety. Have I your permission so far to deviate from the route of your journey?'

'My ample and full permission,' answered the younger lady.

'Cousin,' said the Lady Hameline, 'I believe with you that the youth means us well; but bethink you — we

transgress the instructions of King Louis, so positively iterated.'

'And why should we regard his instructions?' said the Lady Isabelle. 'I am, I thank Heaven for it, no subject of his; and, as a suppliant, he has abused the confidence he induced me to repose in him. I would not dishonour this young gentleman by weighing his word for an instant against the injunctions of yonder crafty and selfish despot.'

'Now, may God bless you for that very word, lady,' said Quentin, joyously; 'and if I deserve not the trust it expresses, tearing with wild horses in this life, and eternal tortures in the next, were e'en too good for my deserts.'

So saying, he spurred his horse and rejoined the Bohemian. This worthy seemed of a remarkably passive if not a forgiving, temper. Injury or threat never dwelt, or at least seemed not to dwell, on his recollection; and he entered into the conversation which Durward presently commenced just as if there had been no unkindly word betwixt them in the course of the morning.

'The dog,' thought the Scot, 'snarls not now, because he intends to clear scores with me at once and for ever, when he can snatch me by the very throat; but we will try for once whether we cannot foil a traitor at his own weapons. Honest Hayraddin,' he said, 'thou hast travelled with us for ten days, yet hast never shown us a specimen of your skill in fortune-telling; which you are, nevertheless, so fond of practising, that you must needs display your gifts in every convent at which we stop, at the risk of being repaid by a night's lodging under a haystack.'

"'You have never asked me for a specimen of my skill,' said the gipsy. 'You are like the rest of the world, contented to ridicule those mysteries which they do not understand.'

'Give me then a present proof of your skill,' said Quentin; and, ungloving his hand, he held it out to the Zingaro.

Hayraddin carefully regarded all the lines which crossed each other on the Scotchman's palm, and noted, with equally scrupulous attention, the little risings or swellings at the roots of the fingers, which were then believed as intimately connected with the disposition, habits, and fortunes of the individual as the organs of the brain are pretended to be in our own time.

'Here is a hand,' said Hayraddin, 'which speaks of toils endured and dangers encountered. I read in it an early acquaintance with the hilt of the sword; and yet some acquaintance also with the clasps of the mass-book.'

'This of my past life you may have learned elsewhere,' said Quentin; 'tell me something of the future.'

'This line from the hill of Venus,' said the Bohemian, 'not broken off abruptly, but attending and accompanying the line of life, argues a certain and large fortune by marriage, whereby the party shall be raised among the wealthy and noble by the influence of successful love.'

'Such promises you make to all who ask your advice,' said Quentin; 'they are part of your art.'

'What I tell you is as certain,' said Hayraddin, 'as that you shall in a brief space be menaced by mighty danger; which I infer from this bright blood-red line

cutting the table-line transversely, and intimating stroke of sword or other violence, from which you shall only be saved by the attachment of a faithful friend.'

'Thyself, ha?' said Quentin, somewhat indignant that the chiromantist should thus practise on his credulity, and endeavour to found a reputation by predicting the consequence of his own treachery.

'My art,' replied the Zingaro, 'tells me nought that concerns myself.'

'In this, then, the seers of my land,' said Quentin, 'excel your boasted knowledge; for their skill teaches them the dangers by which they are themselves beset. I left not my hills without having felt a portion of the double vision with which their inhabitants are gifted; and I will give thee a proof of it, in exchange for thy specimen of palmistry. Hayraddin, the danger which threatens me lies on the right bank of the river; I will avoid it by travelling to Liege on the left bank.'

The guide listened with an apathy which, knowing the circumstances in which Maugrabin stood, Quentin could not by any means comprehend. 'If you accomplish your purpose,' was the Bohemian's reply, 'the dangerous crisis will be transferred from your lot to mine.'

'I thought,' said Quentin, 'that you said but now that you could not presage your own fortune?'

'Not in the manner in which I have but now told you yours,' answered Hayraddin; 'but it requires little knowledge of Louis of Valois to presage that he will hang your guide because your pleasure was to deviate from the road which he recommended.'

'The attaining with safety the purpose of the journey, and ensuring its happy termination,' said Quentin,

'must atone for a deviation from the exact line of the prescribed route.'

'Ay,' replied the Bohemian, 'if you are sure that the King had in his own eye the same termination of the pilgrimage which he insinuated to you.'

'And of what other termination is it possible that he could have been meditating? or why should you suppose he had any purpose in his thought other than was avowed in his direction?' inquired Quentin.

'Simply,' replied the Zingaro, 'that those who know aught of the Most Christian King are aware that the purpose about which he is most anxious is always that which he is least willing to declare. Let our gracious Louis send twelve embassies, and I will forfeit my neck to the gallows a year before it is due, if in eleven of them there is not something at the bottom of the ink-horn more than the pen has written in the letters of credence.'

'I regard not your foul suspicions,' answered Quentin; 'my duty is plain and peremptory — to convey these ladies in safety to Liege; and I take it on me to think that I best discharge that duty in changing our prescribed route, and keeping the left side of the river Maes. It is likewise the direct road to Liege. By crossing the river, we should lose time and incur fatigue to no purpose. Wherefore should we do so?'

'Only because pilgrims, as they call themselves, destined for Cologne,' said Hayraddin, 'do not usually descend the Maes so low as Liege; and that the route of the ladies will be accounted contradictory of their professed destination.'

'If we are challenged on that account,' said Quentin, 'we will say that alarms of the wicked Duke of Gueldres,

or of William de la Marck, or of the *écorcheurs* and lanzknechts, on the right side of the river, justify our holding by the left, instead of our intended route.'

'As you will, my good seignior,' replied the Bohemian. 'I am, for my part, equally ready to guide you down the left as down the right side of the Maes. Your excuse to your master you must make out for yourself.'

Quentin, although rather surprised, was at the same time pleased with the ready, or at least the unrepugnant, acquiescence of Hayraddin in their change of route, for he needed his assistance as a guide, and yet had feared that the disconcerting of his intended act of treachery would have driven him to extremity. Besides, to expel the Bohemian from their society would have been the ready mode to bring down William de la Marck, with whom he was in correspondence, upon their intended route; whereas, if Hayraddin remained with them, Quentin thought he could manage to prevent the Moor from having any communication with strangers, unless he was himself aware of it.

Abandoning, therefore, all thoughts of their original route, the little party followed that by the left bank of the broad Maes so speedily and successfully that the next day early brought them to the purposed end of their journey. They found that the Bishop of Liege, for the sake of his health, as he himself alleged, but rather, perhaps, to avoid being surprised by the numerous mutinous population of the city, had established his residence in his beautiful Castle of Schonwaldt, about a mile without Liege.

Just as they approached the castle, they saw the prelate returning in long procession from the neighbouring

city, in which he had been officiating at the performance of high mass. He was at the head of a splendid train of religious, civil, and military men, mingled together, or, as the old ballad-maker expresses it —

> With many a cross-bearer before,
> And many a spear behind.

The procession made a noble appearance, as, winding along the verdant banks of the broad Maes, it wheeled into, and was as it were devoured by, the huge Gothic portal of the episcopal residence.

But when the party came more near, they found that circumstances around the castle argued a doubt and sense of insecurity, which contradicted that display of pomp and power which they had just witnessed. Strong guards of the bishop's soldiers were heedfully maintained all around the mansion and its immediate vicinity; and the prevailing appearances, in an ecclesiastical residence, seemed to argue a sense of danger in the reverend prelate, who found it necessary thus to surround himself with all the defensive precautions of war. The Ladies of Croye, when announced by Quentin, were reverently ushered into the great hall, where they met with the most cordial reception from the bishop, who met them there at the head of his little court. He would not permit them to kiss his hand, but welcomed them with a salute, which had something in it of gallantry on the part of a prince to fine women, and something also of the holy affection of a pastor to the sisters of his flock.

Louis of Bourbon, the reigning Bishop of Liege, was in truth a generous and kind-hearted prince, whose life

had not indeed been always confined, with precise strictness, within the bounds of his clerical profession; but who, notwithstanding, had uniformly maintained the frank and honourable character of the house of Bourbon, from which he was descended.

In later times, as age advanced, the prelate had adopted habits more beseeming a member of the hierarchy than his early reign had exhibited, and was loved among the neighbouring princes as a noble ecclesiastic, generous and magnificent in his ordinary mode of life, though preserving no very ascetic severity of character, and governing with an easy indifference which, amid his wealthy and mutinous subjects, rather encouraged than subdued rebellious purposes.

The bishop was so fast an ally of the Duke of Burgundy, that the latter claimed almost a joint sovereignty in his bishopric, and repaid the good-natured ease with which the prelate admitted claims which he might easily have disputed, by taking his part on all occasions, with the determined and furious zeal which was a part of his character. He used to say, 'He considered Liege as his own, the bishop as his brother (indeed they might be accounted such, in consequence of the Duke having married for his first wife the bishop's sister), and that he who annoyed Louis of Bourbon had to do with Charles of Burgundy' — a threat which, considering the character and the power of the prince who used it, would have been powerful with any but the rich and discontented city of Liege, where much wealth had, according to the ancient proverb, made wit waver.

The prelate, as we have said, assured the Ladies of Croye of such intercession as his interest at the court of

Burgundy, used to the uttermost, might gain for them, and which, he hoped might be the more effectual, as Campo-basso, from some late discoveries, stood rather lower than formerly in the Duke's personal favour. He promised them also such protection as it was in his power to afford; but the sigh with which he gave the warrant seemed to allow that his power was more precarious than in words he was willing to admit.

'At every event, my dearest daughters,' said the bishop, with an air in which, as in his previous salute, a mixture of spiritual unction qualified the hereditary gallantry of the house of Bourbon, 'Heaven forbid I should abandon the lamb to the wicked wolf, or noble ladies to the oppression of faitours. I am a man of peace, though my abode now rings with arms; but be assured I will care for your safety as for my own; and should matters become yet more distracted here, which, with Our Lady's grace, we trust will be rather pacified than inflamed, we will provide for your safe-conduct to Germany; for not even the will of our brother and protector, Charles of Burgundy, shall prevail with us to dispose of you in any respect contrary to your own inclinations. We cannot comply with your request of sending you to a convent; for, alas! such is the influence of the sons of Belial among the inhabitants of Liege, that we know no retreat to which our authority extends, beyond the bounds of our own castle and the protection of our soldiery. But here you are most welcome, and your train shall have all honourable entertainment; especially this youth, whom you recommend so particularly to our countenance, and on whom in especial we bestow our blessing.'

Quentin kneeled, as in duty bound, to receive the episcopal benediction.

'For yourselves,' proceeded the good prelate, 'you shall reside here with my sister Isabelle, a canoness of Triers, and with whom you may dwell in all honour, even under the roof of so gay a bachelor as the Bishop of Liege.'

He gallantly conducted the ladies to his sister's apartment, as he concluded the harangue of welcome; and his master of the household, an officer who, having taken deacon's orders, held something between a secular and ecclesiastical character, entertained Quentin with the hospitality which his master enjoined, while the other personages of the retinue of the Ladies of Croye were committed to the inferior departments.

In this arrangement Quentin could not help remarking, that the presence of the Bohemian, so much objected to in country convents, seemed, in the household of this wealthy, and perhaps we might say worldly, prelate, to attract neither objection nor remark.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CITY

> Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up —
> To any sudden act of mutiny!
>
> *Julius Cæsar.*

SEPARATED from the Lady Isabelle, whose looks had been for so many days his loadstar, Quentin felt a strange vacancy and chillness of the heart, which he had not yet experienced in any of the vicissitudes to which his life had subjected him. No doubt the cessation of the close and unavoidable intercourse and intimacy betwixt them was the necessary consequence of the countess having obtained a place of settled residence; for, under what pretext could she, had she meditated such an impropriety, have had a gallant young squire such as Quentin in constant attendance upon her?

But the shock of the separation was not the more welcome that it seemed unavoidable, and the proud heart of Quentin swelled at finding he was parted with like an ordinary postilion, or an escort whose duty is discharged; while his eyes sympathised so far as to drop a secret tear or two over the ruins of all those airy castles, so many of which he had employed himself in constructing during their too interesting journey. He made a manly, but at first a vain, effort to throw off this mental dejection; and so, yielding to the feelings he could not suppress, he sat him down in one of the deep recesses formed by a window which lighted the great Gothic hall

of Schonwaldt, and there mused upon his hard fortune, which had not assigned him rank or wealth sufficient to prosecute his daring suit.

Quentin tried to dispel the sadness which overhung him by despatching Charlet, one of the valets, with letters to the court of Louis, announcing the arrival of the Ladies of Croye at Liege. At length his natural buoyancy of temper returned, much excited by the title of an old romaunt which had been just printed at Strasbourg, and which lay beside him in the window, the title of which set forth,

> How the squire of lowe degree,
> Loved the king's daughter of Hongarie.

While he was tracing the 'letters blake' of the ditty so congenial to his own situation, Quentin was interrupted by a touch on the shoulder, and, looking up, beheld the Bohemian standing by him.

Hayraddin, never a welcome sight, was odious from his late treachery, and Quentin sternly asked him 'Why he dared take the freedom to touch a Christian and a gentleman.'

'Simply,' answered the Bohemian, 'because I wished to know if the Christian gentleman had lost his feeling as well as his eyes and ears. I have stood speaking to you these five minutes, and you have stared on that scrap of yellow paper as if it were a spell to turn you into a statue, and had already wrought half its purpose.'

'Well, what dost thou want? Speak, and begone!'

'I want what all men want, though few are satisfied with it,' said Hayraddin: 'I want my due — my ten crowns of gold for guiding the ladies hither.'

'With what face darest thou ask any guerdon beyond my sparing thy worthless life?' said Durward, fiercely; 'thou knowest that it was thy purpose to have betrayed them on the road.'

'But I did *not* betray them,' said Hayraddin; 'if I had, I would have asked no guerdon from you or from them, but from him whom their keeping upon the right-hand side of the river might have benefited. The party that I have served is the party who must pay me.'

'Thy guerdon perish with thee, then, traitor!' said Quentin, telling out the money. 'Get thee to the Boar of Ardennes, or to the devil! but keep hereafter out of my sight, lest I send thee thither before thy time.'

'The Boar of Ardennes!' repeated the Bohemian, with a stronger emotion of surprise than his features usually expressed; 'it was then no vague guess — no general suspicion — which made you insist on changing the road? Can it be — are there really in other lands arts of prophecy more sure than those of our wandering tribes? The willow-tree under which we spoke could tell no tales. But no — no — no — Dolt that I was! I have it — I have it! The willow by the brook near yonder convent — I saw you look towards it as you passed it, about half a mile from yon hive of drones — that could not indeed speak, but it might hide one who could hear! I will hold my councils in an open plain henceforth: not a bunch of thistles shall be near me for a Scot to shroud amongst. Ha! ha! the Scot hath beat the Zingaro at his own subtle weapons. But know, Quentin Durward, that you have foiled me to the marring of thine own fortune. Yes! the fortune I told thee of, from

the lines on thy hand, had been richly accomplished but for thine own obstinacy.'

'By St. Andrew,' said Quentin, 'thy impudence makes me laugh in spite of myself. How or in what should thy successful villainy have been of service to me? I heard, indeed, that you did stipulate to save my life, which condition your worthy allies would speedily have forgotten had we once come to blows; but in what thy betrayal of these ladies could have served me, but by exposing me to death or captivity, is a matter beyond human brains to conjecture.'

'No matter thinking of it, then,' said Hayraddin, 'for I mean still to surprise you with my gratitude. Had you kept back my hire, I should have held that we were quit, and had left you to your own foolish guidance. As it is, I remain your debtor for yonder matter on the banks of the Cher.'

'Methinks I have already taken out the payment in cursing and abusing thee,' said Quentin.

'Hard words or kind ones,' said the Zingaro, 'are but wind, which make no weight in the balance. Had you struck me, indeed, instead of threatening —'

'I am likely enough to take out payment in that way, if you provoke me longer.'

'I would not advise it,' said the Zingaro; 'such payment, made by a rash hand, might exceed the debt, and unhappily leave a balance on your side, which I am not one to forget or forgive. And now farewell, but not for a long space; I go to bid adieu to the Ladies of Croye.'

'Thou!' said Quentin in astonishment — '*thou* be admitted to the presence of the ladies, and here, where

they are in a manner recluses under the protection of the bishop's sister, a noble canoness! It is impossible.'

'Marthon, however, waits to conduct me to their presence,' said the Zingaro, with a sneer; 'and I must pray your forgiveness if I leave you something abruptly.'

He turned as if to depart, but instantly coming back said, with a tone of deep and serious emphasis, 'I know your hopes; they are daring, yet not vain if I aid them. I know your fears; they should teach prudence, not timidity. Every woman may be won. A count is but a nickname, which will befit Quentin as well as the other nickname of duke befits Charles, or that of king befits Louis.'

Ere Durward could reply, the Bohemian had left the hall. Quentin instantly followed; but, better acquainted than the Scot with the passages of the house, Hayraddin kept the advantage which he had gotten; and the pursuer lost sight of him as he descended a small back staircase. Still Durward followed, though without exact consciousness of his own purpose in doing so. The staircase terminated by a door opening into the alley of a garden, in which he again beheld the Zingaro hastening down a pleached walk.

On two sides, the garden was surrounded by the buildings of the castle — a huge old pile, partly castellated and partly resembling an ecclesiastical building; on the other two sides, the inclosure was a high embattled wall. Crossing the alleys of the garden to another part of the building, where a postern-door opened behind a large massive buttress, overgrown with ivy, Hayraddin looked back, and waved his hand in signal of an exulting fare-

well to his follower, who saw that in effect the postern-door was opened by Marthon, and that the vile Bohemian was admitted into the precincts, as he naturally concluded, of the apartment of the Countesses of Croye. Quentin bit his lips with indignation, and blamed himself severely that he had not made the ladies sensible of the full infamy of Hayraddin's character, and acquainted with his machinations against their safety. The arrogating manner in which the Bohemian had promised to back his suit added to his anger and his disgust; and he felt as if even the hand of the Countess Isabelle would be profaned, were it possible to attain it by such patronage. 'But it is all a deception,' he said — 'a turn of his base juggling artifice. He has procured access to these ladies upon some false pretence, and with some mischievous intention. It is well I have learned where they lodge. I will watch Marthon, and solicit an interview with them, were it but to place them on their guard. It is hard that I must use artifice and brook delay when such as he have admittance openly and without scruple. They shall find, however, that, though I am excluded from their presence, Isabelle's safety is still the chief subject of my vigilance.'

While the young lover was thus meditating, an aged gentleman of the bishop's household approached him from the same door by which he had himself entered the garden, and made him aware, though with the greatest civility of manner, that the garden was private, and reserved only for the use of the bishop and guests of the very highest distinction.

Quentin heard him repeat this information twice ere he put the proper construction upon it; and then starting

as from a reverie, he bowed and hurried out of the garden, the official person following him all the way, and overwhelming him with formal apologies for the necessary discharge of his duty. Nay, so pertinacious was he in his attempts to remove the offence which he conceived Durward to have taken, that he offered to bestow his own company upon him, to contribute to his entertainment; until Quentin, internally cursing his formal foppery, found no better way of escape than pretending a desire of visiting the neighbouring city, and setting off thither at such a round pace as speedily subdued all desire in the gentleman-usher to accompany him farther than the drawbridge. In a few minutes Quentin was within the walls of the city of Liege, then one of the richest in Flanders, and of course in the world.

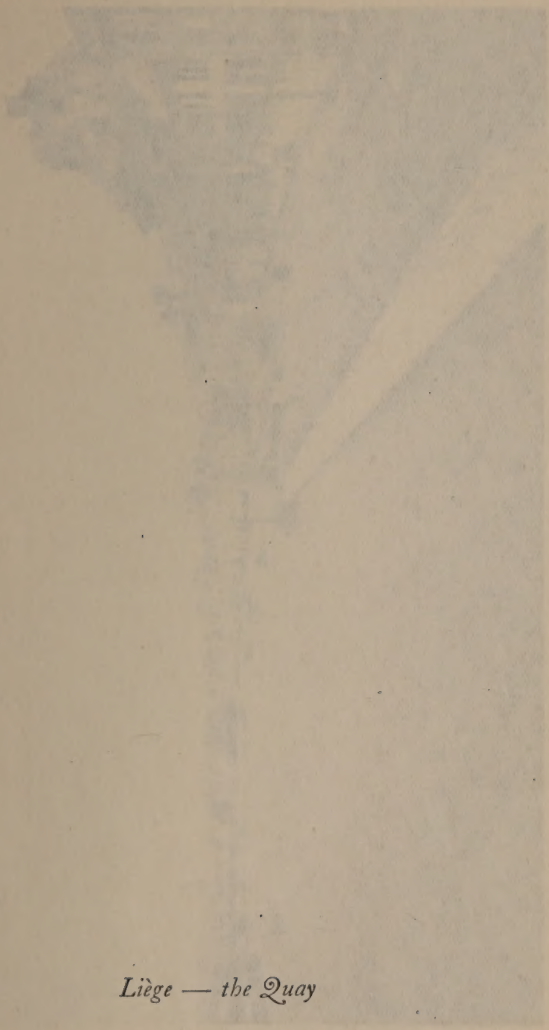
Melancholy, even love-melancholy, is not so deeply seated, at least in minds of a manly and elastic character, as the soft enthusiasts who suffer under it are fond of believing. It yields to unexpected and striking impressions upon the senses, to change of place, to such scenes as create new trains of association, and to the influence of the busy hum of mankind. In a few minutes, Quentin's attention was as much engrossed by the variety of objects presented in rapid succession by the busy streets of Liege as if there had neither been a Countess Isabelle nor a Bohemian in the world.

The lofty houses; the stately, though narrow and gloomy, streets; the splendid display of the richest goods and most gorgeous armour in the warehouses and shops around; the walks crowded by busy citizens of every description, passing and repassing with faces of careful importance or eager bustle; the huge wains, which trans-

ported to and fro the subjects of export and import, the former consisting of broadcloths and serge, arms of all kinds, nails and iron-work, while the latter comprehended every article of use or luxury intended either for the consumption of an opulent city or received in barter and destined to be transported elsewhere — all these objects combined to form an engrossing picture of wealth, bustle, and splendour, to which Quentin had been hitherto a stranger. He admired also the various streams and canals drawn from and communicating with the Maes, which, traversing the city in various directions, offered to every quarter the commercial facilities of water-carriage; and he failed not to hear a mass in the venerable old church of St. Lambert, said to have been founded in the eighth century.

It was upon leaving this place of worship that Quentin began to observe that he, who had been hitherto gazing on all around him with the eagerness of unrestrained curiosity, was himself the object of attention to several groups of substantial-looking burghers, who seemed assembled to look upon him as he left the church, and amongst whom arose a buzz and whisper, which spread from one party to another; while the number of gazers continued to augment rapidly, and the eyes of each who added to it were eagerly directed to Quentin, with a stare which expressed much interest and curiosity, mingled with a certain degree of respect.

At length he now formed the centre of a considerable crowd, which yet yielded before him while he continued to move forward; while those who followed or kept pace with him studiously avoided pressing on him or impeding his motions. Yet his situation was too embarrass-



Liège — the Quay

ing to be long endured, without making some attempt to extricate himself, and to obtain some explanation.

Quentin looked around him, and fixing upon a jolly, stout-made, respectable man, whom, by his velvet cloak and gold chain, he concluded to be a burgher of eminence, and perhaps a magistrate, he asked him, 'Whether he saw anything particular in his appearance, to attract public attention in a degree so unusual? or whether it was the ordinary custom of the people of Liege thus to throng around strangers who chanced to visit their city?'

'Surely not, good seignior,' answered the burgher; 'the Liegeois are neither so idly curious as to practise such a custom, nor is there anything in your dress or appearance, saving that which is most welcome to this city, and which our townsmen are both delighted to see and desirous to honour.'

'This sounds very polite, worthy sir,' said Quentin; 'but, by the cross of St. Andrew, I cannot even guess at your meaning.'

'Your oath, sir,' answered the merchant of Liege, 'as well as your accent, convinces me that we are right in our conjecture.'

'By my patron St. Quentin,' said Durward, 'I am further off from your meaning than ever.'

'There again now,' rejoined the Liegeois, looking, as he spoke, most provokingly, yet most civilly, politic and intelligent. 'It is surely not for us to see that which you, worthy seignior, deem it proper to conceal. But why swear by St. Quentin, if you would not have me construe your meaning? We know the good Count of St. Paul, who lies there at present, wishes well to our cause.'

'On my life,' said Quentin, 'you are under some delusion: I know nothing of St. Paul.'

'Nay, we question you not,' said the burgher; 'although, hark ye — I say, hark in your ear — my name is Pavillon.'

'And what is my business with that, Seignior Pavillon?' said Quentin.

'Nay, nothing; only methinks it might satisfy you that I am trustworthy. Here is my colleague Rouslaer, too.'

Rouslaer advanced, a corpulent dignitary, whose fair round belly, like a battering-ram, 'did shake the press before him,' and who, whispering caution to his neighbour, said, in a tone of rebuke, 'You forget, good colleague, the place is too open; the seignior will retire to your house or mine, and drink a glass of Rhenish and sugar, and then we shall hear more of our good friend and ally, whom we love with all our honest Flemish hearts.'

'I have no news for any of you,' said Quentin, impatiently; 'I will drink no Rhenish; and I only desire of you, as men of account and respectability, to disperse this idle crowd, and allow a stranger to leave your town as quietly as he came into it.'

'Nay, then, sir,' said Rouslaer, 'since you stand so much on your incognito, and with us, too, who are men of confidence, let me ask you roundly, wherefore wear you the badge of your company if you would remain unknown in Liege?'

'What badge and what order?' said Quentin. 'You look like reverend men and grave citizens, yet, on my soul, you are either mad yourselves or desire to drive me so.'

'Sapperment!' said the other burgher, 'this youth would make St. Lambert swear! Why, who wear bonnets with the St. Andrew's cross and *fleur-de-lys* save the Scottish Archers of King Louis's Guards?'

'And supposing I am an archer of the Scottish Guard, why should you make a wonder of my wearing the badge of my company?' said Quentin, impatiently.

'He has avowed it — he has avowed it!' said Rouslaer and Pavillon, turning to the assembled burghers in attitudes of congratulation, with waving arms, extended palms, and large round faces radiating with glee. 'He hath avowed himself an archer of Louis's Guard — of Louis, the guardian of the liberties of Liege!'

A general shout and cry now arose from the multitude, in which were mingled the various sounds of 'Long live Louis of France! Long live the Scottish Guard! Long live the valiant archer! Our liberties, our privileges, or death! No imposts! Long live the valiant Boar of Ardennes! Down with Charles of Burgundy! and confusion to Bourbon and his bishopric!'

Half-stunned by the noise, which began anew in one quarter as soon as it ceased in another, rising and falling like the billows of the sea, and augmented by thousands of voices which roared in chorus from distant streets and market-places, Quentin had yet time to form a conjecture concerning the meaning of the tumult, and a plan for regulating his own conduct.

He had forgotten that, after his skirmish with Orleans and Dunois, one of his comrades had, at Lord Crawford's command, replaced the morion, cloven by the sword of the latter, with one of the steel-lined bonnets which formed a part of the proper and well-known equipment

of the Scotch Guards. That an individual of this body, which was always kept very close to Louis's person, should have appeared in the streets of a city whose civil discontents had been aggravated by the agents of that king, was naturally enough interpreted by the burghers of Liege into a determination on the part of Louis openly to assist their cause; and the apparition of an individual archer was magnified into a pledge of immediate and active support from Louis — nay, into an assurance that his auxiliary forces were actually entering the town at one or other, though no one could distinctly tell which, of the city gates.

To remove a conviction so generally adopted, Quentin easily saw was impossible — nay, that any attempt to undeceive men so obstinately prepossessed in their belief would be attended with personal risk, which, in this case, he saw little use of incurring. He therefore hastily resolved to temporise, and to get free the best way he could; and this resolution he formed while they were in the act of conducting him to the *stadt-house*, where the notables of the town were fast assembling, in order to hear the tidings which he was presumed to have brought, and to regale him with a splendid banquet.

In spite of all his opposition, which was set down to modesty, he was on every side surrounded by the donors of popularity, the unsavoury tide of which now floated around him. His two burgomaster friends, who were *schoppen*, or syndics, of the city, had made fast both his arms. Before him, Nikkel Blok, the chief of the butchers' incorporation, hastily summoned from his office in the shambles, brandished his death-doing axe, yet smeared with blood and brains, with a courage and

grace which *brantwein* alone could inspire. Behind him came the tall, lean, raw-boned, very drunk, and very patriotic, figure of Claus Hammerlein, president of the mystery of the workers in iron, and followed by at least a thousand unwashed artificers of his class. Weavers, nailers, ropemakers, artisans of every degree and calling, thronged forward to join the procession from every gloomy and narrow street. Escape seemed a desperate and impossible adventure.

In this dilemma, Quentin appealed to Rouslaer, who held one arm, and to Pavillon, who had secured the other, and who were conducting him forward at the head of the ovation of which he had so unexpectedly become the principal object. He hastily acquainted them 'with his having thoughtlessly adopted the bonnet of the Scottish Guard, on an accident having occurred to the headpiece in which he had proposed to travel; he regretted that, owing to this circumstance and the sharp wit with which the Liegeois drew the natural inference of his quality and the purpose of his visit, these things had been publicly discovered; and he intimated that, if just now conducted to the *stadt-house*, he might unhappily feel himself under the necessity of communicating to the assembled notables certain matters which he was directed by the King to reserve for the private ears of his excellent gossips, Meinherrs Rouslaer and Pavillon of Liege.'

This last hint operated like magic on the two citizens, who were the most distinguished leaders of the insurgent burghers, and were, like all demagogues of their kind, desirous to keep everything within their own management, so far as possible. They therefore hastily agreed

that Quentin should leave the town for the time, and return by night to Liege, and converse with them privately in the house of Rouslaer, near the gate opposite to Schonwaldt. Quentin hesitated not to tell them that he was at present residing in the bishop's palace, under pretence of bearing despatches from the French court, although his real errand was, as they had well conjectured, designed to the citizens of Liege; and this tortuous mode of conducting a communication, as well as the character and rank of the person to whom it was supposed to be entrusted, was so consonant to the character of Louis as neither to excite doubt nor surprise.

Almost immediately after this *éclaircissement* was completed, the progress of the multitude brought them opposite to the door of Pavillon's house, in one of the principal streets, but which communicated from behind with the Maes by means of a garden, as well as an extensive manufactory of tan-pits and other conveniences for dressing hides; for the patriotic burgher was a felt-dresser, or currier.

It was natural that Pavillon should desire to do the honours of his dwelling to the supposed envoy of Louis, and a halt before his house excited no surprise on the part of the multitude, who, on the contrary, greeted Meinherr Pavillon with a loud *vivat* as he ushered in his distinguished guest. Quentin speedily laid aside his remarkable bonnet for the cap of a felt-maker, and flung a cloak over his other apparel. Pavillon then furnished him with a passport to pass the gates of the city, and to return by night or day as should suit his convenience; and, lastly, committed him to the charge of his daughter, a fair and smiling Flemish lass, with instructions how

he was to be disposed of, while he himself hastened back to his colleague to amuse their friends at the *stadt-house* with the best excuses which they could invent for the disappearance of King Louis's envoy. We cannot, as the footman says in the play, recollect the exact nature of the lie which the belwethers told the flock; but no task is so easy as that of imposing upon a multitude whose eager prejudices have more than half done the business, ere the impostor has spoken a word.

The worthy burgess was no sooner gone than his plump daughter, Trudchen, with many a blush and many a wreathed smile, which suited very prettily with lips like cherries, laughing blue eyes, and a skin transparently pure, escorted the handsome stranger through the pleached alleys of the Sieur Pavillon's garden, down to the water-side, and there saw him fairly embarked in a boat, which two stout Flemings, in their trunk-hose, fur caps, and many-buttoned jerkins, had got in readiness with as much haste as their Low-Country nature would permit.

As the pretty Trudchen spoke nothing but German, Quentin — no disparagement to his loyal affection to the Countess of Croye — could only express his thanks by a kiss on those same cherry lips, which was very gallantly bestowed, and accepted with all modest gratitude; for gallants with a form and face like our Scottish Archer were not of every-day occurrence among the *bourgeoisie* of Liege.[1]

While the boat was rowed up the sluggish waters of the Maes, and passed the defences of the town, Quentin had time enough to reflect what account he ought to

[1] See Note 2.

give of his adventure in Liege, when he returned to the bishop's palace of Schonwaldt; and disdaining alike to betray any person who had reposed confidence in him, although by misapprehension, or to conceal from the hospitable prelate the mutinous state of his capital, he resolved to confine himself to so general an account as might put the bishop upon his guard, while it should point out no individual to his vengeance.

He was landed from the boat within half a mile of the castle, and rewarded his rowers with a guilder, to their great satisfaction. Yet, short as was the space which divided him from Schonwaldt, the castle bell had tolled for dinner, and Quentin found, moreover, that he had approached the castle on a different side from that of the principal entrance, and that to go round would throw his arrival considerably later. He therefore made straight toward the side that was nearest him, as he discerned that it presented an embattled wall, probably that of the little garden already noticed, with a postern opening upon the moat, and a skiff moored by the postern, which might serve, he thought, upon summons, to pass him over. As he approached, in hopes to make his entrance this way, the postern opened, a man came out, and, jumping into the boat, made his way to the farther side of the moat, and then with a long pole pushed the skiff back towards the place where he had embarked. As he came near, Quentin discerned that this person was the Bohemian, who, avoiding him, as was not difficult, held a different path towards Liege, and was presently out of his ken.

Here was new subject for meditation. Had this vagabond heathen been all this while with the Ladies of Croye,

and for what purpose should they so far have graced him with their presence? Tormented with this thought, Durward became doubly determined to seek an explanation with them, for the purpose at once of laying bare the treachery of Hayraddin and announcing to them the perilous state in which their protector, the bishop, was placed by the mutinous state of his town of Liege.

As Quentin thus resolved, he entered the castle by the principal gate, and found that part of the family who assembled for dinner in the great hall, including the bishop's attendant clergy, officers of the household, and strangers below the rank of the very first nobility, were already placed at their meal. A seat at the upper end of the board had, however, been reserved beside the bishop's domestic chaplain, who welcomed the stranger with the old college jest of '*Sero venientibus ossa*,' while he took care so to load his plate with dainties as to take away all appearance of that tendency to reality which, in Quentin's country, is said to render a joke either no joke or at best an unpalatable one.[1]

In vindicating himself from the suspicion of ill-breeding, Quentin briefly described the tumult which had been occasioned in the city by his being discovered to belong to the Scottish Archer Guard of Louis, and endeavoured to give a ludicrous turn to the narrative, by saying that he had been with difficulty extricated by a fat burgher of Liege and his pretty daughter.

But the company were too much interested in the story to taste the jest. All operations of the table were suspended while Quentin told his tale; and when he had ceased, there was a solemn pause, which was

[1] 'A sooth boord (true joke) is no boord,' says the Scot.

only broken by the major-domo saying, in a low and melancholy tone, 'I would to God that we saw those hundred lances of Burgundy!'

'Why should you think so deeply on it?' said Quentin. 'You have many soldiers here, whose trade is arms; and your antagonists are only the rabble of a disorderly city, who will fly before the first flutter of a banner with men-at-arms arrayed beneath it.'

'You do not know the men of Liege,' said the chaplain, 'of whom it may be said that, not even excepting those of Ghent, they are at once the fiercest and the most untameable in Europe. Twice has the Duke of Burgundy chastised them for their repeated revolts against their bishop, and twice hath he suppressed them with much severity, abridged their privileges, taken away their banners, and established rights and claims to himself which were not before competent over a free city of the Empire. Nay, the last time he defeated them with much slaughter near St. Tron, where Liege lost nearly six thousand men, what with the sword, what with those drowned in the flight; and, thereafter, to disable them from further mutiny, Duke Charles refused to enter at any of the gates which they had surrendered, but, beating to the ground forty cubits breadth of their city wall, marched into Liege as a conqueror, with visor closed and lance in rest, at the head of his chivalry, by the breach which he had made. Nay, well were the Liegeois then assured that, but for the intercession of his father, Duke Philip the Good, this Charles, then called Count of Charalois, would have given their town up to spoil. And yet, with all these fresh recollections, with their breaches unrepaired, and their arsenals

scarcely supplied, the sight of an archer's bonnet is sufficient again to stir them to uproar. May God amend all! but I fear there will be bloody work between so fierce a population and so fiery a sovereign; and I would my excellent and kind master had a see of lesser dignity and more safety, for his mitre is lined with thorns instead of ermine. This much I say to you, seignior stranger, to make you aware that, if your affairs detain you not at Schonwaldt, it is a place from which each man of sense should depart as speedily as possible. I apprehend that your ladies are of the same opinion; for one of the grooms who attended them on the route has been sent back by them to the court of Fracce with letters, which, doubtless, are intended to announce their going in search of a safer asylum.'

CHAPTER XX

THE BILLET

Go to — thou art made, if thou desirest to be so. If not, let me see thee still the fellow of servants, and not fit to touch Fortune's fingers. — *Twelfth Night.*

When the tables were drawn, the chaplain, who seemed to have taken a sort of attachment to Quentin Durward's society, or who perhaps desired to extract from him further information concerning the meeting of the morning, led him into a withdrawing-apartment, the windows of which, on one side, projected into the garden; and as he saw his companion's eye gaze rather eagerly upon the spot, he proposed to Quentin to go down and take a view of the curious foreign shrubs with which the bishop had enriched its parterres.

Quentin excused himself, as unwilling to intrude, and therewithal communicated the check which he had received in the morning. The chaplain smiled, and said, 'That there was indeed some ancient prohibition respecting the bishop's private garden; but this,' he added with a smile, 'was when our reverend father was a princely young prelate of not more than thirty years of age, and when many fair ladies frequented the castle for ghostly consolation. Need there was,' he said, with a downcast look, and a smile, half simple and half intelligent, 'that these ladies, pained in conscience, who were ever lodged in the apartments now occupied by the noble canoness, should have some space for taking

the air, secure from the intrusion of the profane. But of late years,' he added, 'this prohibition, although not formally removed, has fallen entirely out of observance, and remains but as the superstition which lingers in the brain of a superannuated gentleman-usher. If you please,' he added, 'we will presently descend, and try whether the place be haunted or no.'

Nothing could have been more agreeable to Quentin than the prospect of a free entrance into the garden, through means of which, according to a chance which had hitherto attended his passion, he hoped to communicate with, or at least obtain sight of, the object of his affections, from some such turret, or balcony-window, or similar 'coign of vantage,' as at the hostelry of the Fleur-de-Lys, near Plessis, or the Dauphin's Tower, within that castle itself. Isabelle seemed still destined, wherever she made her abode, to be the 'lady of the turret.'

When Durward descended with his new friend into the garden, the latter seemed a terrestrial philosopher, entirely busied with the things of the earth; while the eyes of Quentin, if they did not seek the heavens, like those of an astrologer, ranged at least all around the windows, balconies, and especially the turrets, which projected on every part of the inner front of the old building, in order to discover that which was to be his cynosure.

While thus employed, the young lover heard with total neglect, if indeed he heard at all, the enumeration of plants, herbs, and shrubs, which his reverend conductor pointed out to him; of which this was choice, because of prime use in medicine; and that more choice,

for yielding a rare flavour to pottage; and a third choicest of all, because possessed of no merit but its extreme scarcity. Still it was necessary to preserve some semblance at least of attention; which the youth found so difficult, that he fairly wished at the devil the officious naturalist and the whole vegetable kingdom. He was relieved at length by the striking of a clock, which summoned the chaplain to some official duty.

The reverend man made many unnecessary apologies for leaving his new friend, and concluded by giving him the agreeable assurance, that he might walk in the garden till supper, without much risk of being disturbed.

'It is,' said he, 'the place where I always study my own homilies, as being most sequestered from the resort of strangers. I am now about to deliver one of them in the chapel, if you please to favour me with your audience. I have been thought to have some gift — but the glory be where it is due!'

Quentin excused himself for this evening, under pretence of a severe headache, which the open air was likely to prove the best cure for; and at length the well-meaning priest left him to himself.

It may be well imagined, that in the curious inspection which he now made, at more leisure, of every window or aperture which looked into the garden, those did not escape which were in the immediate neighbourhood of the small door by which he had seen Marthon admit Hayraddin, as he pretended, to the apartment of the countesses. But nothing stirred or showed itself, which could either confute or confirm the tale which the Bohemian had told, until it was becoming dusky; and Quentin began to be sensible, he scarce knew why, that

his sauntering so long in the garden might be subject of suspicion.

Just as he had resolved to depart, and was taking what he had destined for his last turn under the windows which had such attraction for him, he heard above him a slight and cautious sound, like that of a cough, as intended to call his attention, and to avoid the observation of others. As he looked up in joyful surprise, a casement opened — a female hand was seen to drop a billet, which fell into a rosemary bush that grew at the foot of the wall. The precaution used in dropping this letter prescribed equal prudence and secrecy in reading it. The garden, surrounded, as we have said, upon two sides by the buildings of the palace, was commanded, of course, by the windows of many apartments; but there was a sort of grotto of rock-work, which the chaplain had shown Durward with much complacency. To snatch up the billet, thrust it into his bosom, and hie to this place of secrecy, was the work of a single minute. He there opened the precious scroll, and blessed, at the same time, the memory of the monks of Aberbrothock, whose nurture had rendered him capable of deciphering its contents.

The first line contained the injunction, 'Read this in secret,' — and the contents were as follows: 'What your eyes have too boldly said mine have perhaps too rashly understood. But unjust persecution makes its victims bold, and it were better to throw myself on the gratitude of one than to remain the object of pursuit to many. Fortune has her throne upon a rock; but brave men fear not to climb. If you dare do aught for one that hazards much, you need but pass into this garden

at prime to-morrow, wearing in your cap a blue-and-white feather; but expect no further communication. Your stars have, they say, destined you for greatness, and disposed you to gratitude. Farewell — be faithful, prompt, and resolute, and doubt not thy fortune.' Within this letter was enclosed a ring with a table-diamond, on which were cut, in form of a lozenge, the ancient arms of the house of Croye.

The first feeling of Quentin upon this occasion was unmingled ecstasy — a pride and joy which seemed to raise him to the stars, — a determination to do or die, influenced by which he treated with scorn the thousand obstacles that placed themselves betwixt him and the goal of his wishes.

In this mood of rapture, and unable to endure any interruption, which might withdraw his mind, were it but for a moment, from so ecstatic a subject of contemplation, Durward, retiring to the interior of the castle, hastily assigned his former pretext of a headache for not joining the household of the bishop at the supper-meal, and, lighting his lamp, betook himself to the chamber which had been assigned him, to read, and to read again and again, the precious billet, and to kiss a thousand times the no less precious ring.

But such high-wrought feelings could not remain long in the same ecstatic tone. A thought pressed upon him, though he repelled it as ungrateful — as even blasphemous, that the frankness of the confession implied less delicacy, on the part of her who made it, than was consistent with the high romantic feeling of adoration with which he had hitherto worshipped the Lady Isabelle. No sooner did this ungracious thought intrude itself

than he hastened to stifle it, as he would have stifled a hissing and hateful adder that had intruded itself into his couch. Was it for him — him the favoured, on whose account she had stooped from her sphere, to ascribe blame to her for the very act of condescension, without which he dared not have raised his eyes towards her? Did not her very dignity of birth and of condition reverse, in her case, the usual rules which impose silence on the lady until her lover shall have first spoken? To these arguments, which he boldly formed into syllogisms, and avowed to himself, his vanity might possibly suggest one which he cared not to embody even mentally with the same frankness — that the merit of the party beloved might perhaps warrant, on the part of the lady, some little departure from common rules; and, after all, as in the case of Malvolio, there was example for it in chronicle. The squire of low degree, of whom he had just been reading, was, like himself, a gentleman void of land and living, and yet the generous Princess of Hungary bestowed on him, without scruple, more substantial marks of her affection than the billet he had just received: —

> 'Welcome,' she said, 'my swete squyre,
> My heartis roote, my soule's desire;
> I will give thee kisses three,
> And als five hundrid poundis in fee.'

And again the same faithful history made the King of Hongrie himself avouch,

> 'I have yknown many a page
> Come to be prince by marriage.'

So that, upon the whole, Quentin generously and magnanimously reconciled himself to a line of conduct on

the countess's part by which he was likely to be so highly benefited.

But this scruple was succeeded by another doubt, harder of digestion. The traitor Hayraddin had been in the apartments of the ladies, for aught Quentin knew for the space of four hours, and, considering the hints which he had thrown out, of possessing an influence of the most interesting kind over the fortunes of Quentin Durward, what should assure him that this train was not of his laying? and if so, was it not probable that such a dissembling villain had set it on foot to conceal some new plan of treachery — perhaps to seduce Isabelle out of the protection of the worthy bishop? This was a matter to be closely looked into, for Quentin felt a repugnance to this individual proportioned to the unabashed impudence with which he had avowed his profligacy, and could not bring himself to hope, that anything in which he was concerned could ever come to an honourable or happy conclusion.

These various thoughts rolled over Quentin's mind like misty clouds, to dash and obscure the fair landscape which his fancy had at first drawn, and his couch was that night a sleepless one. At the hour of prime, ay, and an hour before it, was he in the castle-garden, where no one now opposed either his entrance or his abode, with a feather of the assigned colour, as distinguished as he could by any means procure in such haste. No notice was taken of his appearance for nearly two hours; at length he heard a few notes of the lute, and presently the lattice opened right above the little postern-door at which Marthon had admitted Hayraddin, and Isabelle, in maidenly beauty, appeared at the opening, greeted

him half-kindly, half-shyly, coloured extremely at the deep and significant reverence with which he returned her courtesy, shut the casement and disappeared.

Daylight and champaign could discover no more! The authenticity of the billet was ascertained; it only remained what was to follow, and of this the fair writer had given him no hint. But no immediate danger impended. The countess was in a strong castle, under the protection of a prince, at once respectable for his secular and venerable for his ecclesiastical authority. There was neither immediate room nor occasion for the exulting squire interfering in the adventure; and it was sufficient if he kept himself prompt to execute her commands whenever they should be communicated to him. But Fate purposed to call him into action sooner than he was aware of.

It was the fourth night after his arrival at Schonwaldt when Quentin had taken measures for sending back on the morrow, to the court of Louis, the remaining groom who had accompanied him on his journey, with letters from himself to his uncle and Lord Crawford, renouncing the service of France, for which the treachery to which he had been exposed by the private instructions of Hayraddin gave him an excuse, both in honour and prudence; and he betook himself to his bed with all the rosy-coloured ideas around him which flutter about the couch of a youth when he loves dearly, and thinks his love is sincerely repaid.

But Quentin's dreams, which at first partook of the nature of those happy influences under which he had fallen asleep, began by degrees to assume a more terrific character.

He walked with the Countess Isabelle beside a smooth and inland lake, such as formed the principal characteristic of his native glen; and he spoke to her of his love, without any consciousness of the impediments which lay between them. She blushed and smiled when she listened, even as he might have expected from the tenor of the letter, which, sleeping or waking, lay nearest to his heart. But the scene suddenly changed from summer to winter, from calm to tempest; the winds and the waves rose with such a contest of surge and whirlwind, as if the demons of the water and of the air had been contending for their roaring empires in rival strife. The rising waters seemed to cut off their advance and their retreat; the increasing tempest, which dashed them against each other, seemed to render their remaining on the spot impossible; and the tumultuous sensations produced by the apparent danger awoke the dreamer.

He awoke; but although the circumstances of the vision had disappeared, and given place to reality, the noise, which had probably suggested them, still continued to sound in his ears.

Quentin's first impulse was to sit erect in bed, and listen with astonishment to sounds, which, if they had announced a tempest, might have shamed the wildest that ever burst down from the Grampians; and again in a minute he became sensible, that the tumult was not excited by the fury of the elements, but by the wrath of men.

He sprung from bed, and looked from the window of his apartment; but it opened into the garden, and on that side all was quiet, though the opening of the case-

ment made him still more sensible, from the shouts which reached his ears, that the outside of the castle was beleaguered and assaulted, and that by a numerous and determined enemy. Hastily collecting his dress and arms, and putting them on with such celerity as darkness and surprise permitted, his attention was solicited by a knocking at the door of his chamber. As Quentin did not immediately answer, the door, which was a slight one, was forced open from without, and the intruder, announced by his peculiar dialect to be the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin, entered the apartment. A phial, which he held in his hand, touched by a match, produced a dark flash of ruddy fire, by means of which he kindled a lamp, which he took from his bosom.

'The horoscope of your destinies,' he said energetically to Durward, without any further greeting, 'now turns upon the determination of a minute.'

'Caitiff!' said Quentin, in reply, 'there is treachery around us; and where there is treachery, thou *must* have a share in it.'

'You are mad,' answered Maugrabin; 'I never betrayed any one but to gain by it, and wherefore should I betray you, by whose safety I can take more advantage than by your destruction? Hearken for a moment, if it be possible for you, to one note of reason ere it is sounded into your ear by the death-shot of ruin. The Liegeois are up; William de la Marck with his band leads them. Were there means of resistance, their numbers and his fury would overcome them; but there are next to none. If you would save the countess and your own hopes, follow me, in the name of her who sent you a table-diamond, with three leopards engraved on it!'

'Lead the way,' said Quentin, hastily. 'In that name, I dare every danger!'

'As I shall manage it,' said the Bohemian, 'there is no danger, if you can but withhold your hand from strife which does not concern you; for, after all, what is it to you whether the bishop, as they call him, slaughters his flock, or the flock slaughters the shepherd? Ha! ha! ha! Follow me, but with caution and patience; subdue your own courage, and confide in my prudence; and my debt of thankfulness is paid, and you have a countess for your spouse. Follow me.'

'I follow,' said Quentin, drawing his sword; 'but the moment in which I detect the least sign of treachery, thy head and body are three yards separate!'

Without more conversation, the Bohemian, seeing that Quentin was now fully armed and ready, ran down the stairs before him, and winded hastily through various side-passages, until they gained the little garden. Scarce a light was to be seen on that side, scarce any bustle was to be heard; but no sooner had Quentin entered the open space than the noise on the opposite side of the castle became ten times more stunningly audible, and he could hear the various war-cries of 'Liege! Liege! Sanglier! Sanglier!' shouted by the assailants, while the feebler cry of 'Our Lady for the Prince Bishop!' was raised in a faint and faltering tone, by those of the prelate's soldiers who had hastened, though surprised and at disadvantage, to the defence of the walls.

But the interest of the fight, notwithstanding the martial character of Quentin Durward, was indifferent to him in comparison of the fate of Isabelle of Croye,

which, he had reason to fear, would be a dreadful one, unless rescued from the power of the dissolute and cruel freebooter, who was now, as it seemed, bursting the gates of the castle. He reconciled himself to the aid of the Bohemian, as men in a desperate illness refuse not the remedy prescribed by quacks and mountebanks, and followed across the garden, with the intention of being guided by him until he should discover symptoms of treachery, and then piercing him through the heart, or striking his head from his body. Hayraddin seemed himself conscious that his safety turned on a feather-weight, for he forbore, from the moment they entered the open air, all his wonted gibes and quirks, and seemed to have made a vow to act at once with modesty, courage, and activity.

At the opposite door, which led to the ladies' apartments, upon a low signal made by Hayraddin, appeared two women, muffled in the black silk veils which were then, as now, worn by the women in the Netherlands. Quentin offered his arm to one of them, who clung to it with trembling eagerness, and indeed hung upon him so much that had her weight been greater she must have much impeded their retreat. The Bohemian, who conducted the other female, took the road straight for the postern which opened upon the moat, through the garden-wall, close to which the little skiff was drawn up, by means of which Quentin had formerly observed Hayraddin himself retreating from the castle.

As they crossed, the shouts of storm and successful violence seemed to announce that the castle was in the act of being taken; and so dismal was the sound in Quentin's ears, that he could not help swearing aloud, 'But

that my blood is irretrievably devoted to the fulfilment of my present duty, I would back to the wall, take faithful part with the hospitable bishop, and silence some of those knaves whose throats are full of mutiny and robbery!'

The lady, whose arm was still folded in his, pressed it lightly as he spoke, as if to make him understand that there was a nearer claim on his chivalry than the defence of Schonwaldt; while the Bohemian exclaimed, loud enough to be heard, 'Now, that I call right Christian frenzy, which would turn back to fight, when love and fortune both demand that we should fly. On — on, with all the haste you can make. Horses wait us in yonder thicket of willows.'

'There are but two horses,' said Quentin, who saw them in the moonlight.

'All that I could procure without exciting suspicion, and enough, besides,' replied the Bohemian. 'You two must ride for Tongres ere the way becomes unsafe; Marthon will abide with the women of our horde, with whom she is an old acquaintance. Know, she is a daughter of our tribe, and only dwelt among you to serve our purpose as occasion should fall.'

'Marthon!' exclaimed the countess, looking at the veiled female with a shriek of surprise; 'is not this my kinswoman?'

'Only Marthon,' said Hayraddin. 'Excuse me that little piece of deceit. I dared not carry off *both* the Ladies of Croye from the Wild Boar of Ardennes.'

'Wretch!' said Quentin, emphatically; 'but it is not — shall not — be too late; I will back to rescue the Lady Hameline.'

'Hameline,' whispered the lady, in a disturbed voice, 'hangs on thy arm to thank thee for her rescue.'

'Ha! what! How is this?' said Quentin, extricating himself from her hold, and with less gentleness than he would at any other time have used towards a female of any rank. 'Is the Lady Isabelle then left behind? Farewell — farewell.'

As he turned to hasten back to the castle, Hayraddin laid hold of him. 'Nay, hear you — hear you — you run upon your death! What the foul fiend did you wear the colours of the old one for? I will never trust blue and white silk again. But she has almost as large a dower — has jewels and gold — hath pretensions, too, upon the earldom.'

While he spoke thus, panting on in broken sentences, the Bohemian struggled to detain Quentin, who at length laid his hand on his dagger, in order to extricate himself.

'Nay, if that be the case,' said Hayraddin, unloosing his hold, 'go, and the devil, if there be one, go along with you!' And, soon as freed from his hold, the Scot shot back to the castle with the speed of the wind.

Hayraddin then turned round to the Countess Hameline, who had sunk down on the ground, between shame, fear, and disappointment.

'Here has been a mistake,' he said. 'Up, lady, and come with me; I will provide you, ere morning comes, a gallanter husband than this smock-faced boy; and if one will not serve, you shall have twenty.'

The Lady Hameline was as violent in her passions as she was vain and weak in her understanding. Like many other persons, she went tolerably well through the

ordinary duties of life; but in a crisis like the present, she was entirely incapable of doing aught, save pouring forth unavailing lamentations, and accusing Hayraddin of being a thief, a base slave, an impostor, a murderer.

'Call me Zingaro,' returned he, composedly, 'and you have said all at once.'

'Monster! you said the stars had decreed our union, and caused me to write — O wretch that I was!' exclaimed the unhappy lady.

'And so they *had* decreed your union,' said Hayraddin, 'had both parties been willing; but think you the blessed constellations can make any one wed against his will? I was led into error with your accursed Christian gallantries, and fopperies of ribbons and favours, and the youth prefers veal to beef, I think, that's all. Up and follow me; and take notice, I endure neither weeping nor swooning.'

'I will not stir a foot,' said the countess, obstinately.

'By the bright welkin, but you shall, though!' exclaimed Hayraddin. 'I swear to you, by all that ever fools believed in, that you have to do with one who would care little to strip you naked, bind you to a tree, and leave you to your fortune!'

'Nay,' said Marthon, interfering, 'by your favour she shall not be misused. I wear a knife as well as you, and can use it. She is a kind woman, though a fool. And you, madam, rise up and follow us. Here has been a mistake; but it is something to have saved life and limb. There are many in yonder castle would give all the wealth in the world to stand where we do now.'

As Marthon spoke, a clamour, in which the shouts of

victory were mingled with screams of terror and despair, was wafted to them from the castle of Schonwaldt.

'Hear that, lady!' said Hayraddin, 'and be thankful you are not adding your treble pipe to yonder concert. Believe me, I will care for you honestly, and the stars shall keep their words, and find you a good husband.'

Like some wild animal, exhausted and subdued by terror and fatigue, the Countess Hameline yielded herself up to the conduct of her guides, and suffered herself to be passively led whichever way they would. Nay, such was the confusion of her spirits and the exhaustion of her strength, that the worthy couple, who half bore, half led her, carried on their discourse in her presence without her even understanding it.

'I ever thought your plan was folly,' said Marthon. 'Could you have brought the *young* people together, indeed, we might have had a hold on their gratitude, and a footing in their castle. But what chance of so handsome a youth wedding this old fool?'

'Rizpah,' said Hayraddin, 'you have borne the name of a Christian, and dwelt in the tents of those besotted people, till thou hast become a partaker in their follies. How could I dream that he would have made scruples about a few years, youth or age, when the advantages of the match were so evident? And thou knowest, there would been have no moving yonder coy wench to be so frank as this coming countess here, who hangs on our arms as dead a weight as a wool-pack. I loved the lad too, and would have done him a kindness: to wed him to this old woman was to make his fortune; to unite him to Isabelle were to have brought on him De la Marck, Burgundy, France — every one that challenges an inter-

est in disposing of her hand. And this silly woman's wealth being chiefly in gold and jewels, we should have had our share. But the bow-string has burst and the arrow failed. Away with her; we will bring her to William with the Beard. By the time he has gorged himself with wassail, as is his wont, he will not know an old countess from a young one. Away, Rizpah; bear a gallant heart. The bright Aldebaran still influences the destinies of the Children of the Desert!'

CHAPTER XXI

THE SACK

> The gates of mercy shall be all shut up,
> And the flesh'd soldier, rough and hard of heart,
> In liberty of bloody hand shall range,
> With conscience wide as hell.
>
> *Henry V.*

THE surprised and affrighted garrison of the castle of Schonwaldt had, nevertheless, for some time, made good the defence of the place against the assailants; but the immense crowds which, issuing from the city of Liege, thronged to the assault like bees, distracted their attention and abated their courage.

There were also disaffection at least, if not treachery, among the defenders; for some called out to surrender, and others, deserting their posts, tried to escape from the castle. Many threw themselves from the walls into the moat, and such as escaped drowning flung aside their distinguishing badges, and saved themselves by mingling among the motley crowd of assailants. Some few, indeed, from attachment to the bishop's person, drew around him, and continued to defend the great keep, to which he had fled; and others, doubtful of receiving quarter, or from an impulse of desperate courage, held out other detached bulwarks and towers of the extensive building. But the assailants had got possession of the courts and lower parts of the edifice, and were busy pursuing the vanquished and searching for spoil, while one individual, as if he sought for that death from which

all others were flying, endeavoured to force his way into the scene of tumult and horror, under apprehensions still more horrible to his imagination than the realities around were to his sight and senses. Whoever had seen Quentin Durward that fatal night, not knowing the meaning of his conduct, had accounted him a raging madman; whoever had appreciated his motives had ranked him nothing beneath a hero of romance.

Approaching Schonwaldt on the same side from which he had left it, the youth met several fugitives making for the wood, who naturally avoided him as an enemy, because he came in an opposite direction from that which they had adopted. When he came nearer, he could hear, and partly see, men dropping from the garden-wall into the castle fosse, and others who seemed precipitated from the battlements by the assailants. His courage was not staggered, even for an instant. There was not time to look for the boat, even had it been practicable to use it, and it was in vain to approach the postern of the garden, which was crowded with fugitives, who ever and anon, as they were thrust through it by the pressure behind, fell into the moat which they had no means of crossing.

Avoiding that point, Quentin threw himself into the moat, near what was called the little gate of the castle, and where there was a drawbridge, which was still elevated. He avoided with difficulty the fatal grasp of more than one sinking wretch, and, swimming to the drawbridge, caught hold of one of the chains which was hanging down, and, by a great exertion of strength and activity, swayed himself out of the water, and attained the platform from which the bridge was suspended. As

with hands and knees he struggled to make good his footing, a lanzknecht, with his bloody sword in his hand, made towards him, and raised his weapon for a blow, which must have been fatal.

'How now, fellow!' said Quentin, in a tone of authority. 'Is that the way in which you assist a comrade? Give me your hand.'

The soldier in silence, and not without hesitation, reached him his arm, and helped him upon the platform, when, without allowing him time for reflection, the Scot continued in the same tone of command — 'To the western tower, if you would be rich: the priest's treasury is in the western tower.'

These words were echoed on every hand: 'To the western tower, the treasure is in the western tower!' And the stragglers who were within hearing of the cry, took, like a herd of raging wolves, the direction opposite to that which Quentin, come life, come death, was determined to pursue.

Bearing himself as if he were one, not of the conquered, but of the victors, he made a way into the garden, and pushed across it, with less interruption than he could have expected; for the cry of 'To the western tower!' had carried off one body of the assailants, and another was summoned together, by war-cry and trumpet-sound, to assist in repelling a desperate sally, attempted by the defenders of the keep, who had hoped to cut their way out of the castle, bearing the bishop along with them. Quentin, therefore, crossed the garden with an eager step and throbbing heart, commending himself to those Heavenly powers which had protected him through the numberless perils of his life, and bold in his determina-

tion to succeed, or leave his life in this desperate undertaking. Ere he reached the garden, three men rushed on him with levelled lances, crying, 'Liege — Liege!'

Putting himself in defence, but without striking, he replied, 'France — France, friend to Liege!'

'*Vivat France!*' cried the burghers of Liege, and passed on. The same signal proved a talisman to avert the weapons of four or five of La Marck's followers, whom he found straggling in the garden, and who set upon him, crying, 'Sanglier!'

In a word, Quentin began to hope that his character as an emissary of King Louis, the private instigator of the insurgents of Liege, and the secret supporter of William de la Marck, might possibly bear him through the horrors of the night.

On reaching the turret, he shuddered when he found the little side-door, through which Marthon and the Countess Hameline had shortly before joined him, was now blockaded with more than one dead body.

Two of them he dragged hastily aside, and was stepping over the third body, in order to enter the portal, when the supposed dead man laid hand on his cloak, and entreated him to stay and assist him to rise. Quentin was about to use rougher methods than struggling to rid himself of this untimely obstruction, when the fallen man continued to exclaim, 'I am stifled here, in mine own armour! I am the Syndic Pavillon of Liege! If you are for us, I will enrich you — if you are for the other side, I will protect you; but do not — do not leave me to die the death of a smothered pig!'

In the midst of this scene of blood and confusion, the presence of mind of Quentin suggested to him, that this

dignitary might have the means of protecting their retreat. He raised him on his feet, and asked him if he was wounded.

'Not wounded — at least I think not,' answered the burgher; 'but much out of wind.'

'Sit down then on this stone, and recover your breath,' said Quentin; 'I will return instantly.'

'For whom are you?' said the burgher, still detaining him.

'For France, for France,' answered Quentin, studying to get away.

'What! my lively young archer?' said the worthy syndic. 'Nay, if it has been my fate to find a friend in this fearful night, I will not quit him, I promise you. Go where you will, I follow; and, could I get some of the tight lads of our guildry together, I might be able to help you in turn; but they are all squandered abroad like so many pease. Oh, it is a fearful night!'

During this time, he was dragging himself on after Quentin, who, aware of the importance of securing the countenance of a person of such influence, slackened his pace to assist him, although cursing in his heart the encumbrance that retarded him.

At the top of the stair was an ante-room, with boxes and trunks, which bore marks of having been rifled, as some of the contents lay on the floor. A lamp, dying in the chimney, shed a feeble beam on a dead or senseless man, who lay across the hearth.

Bounding from Pavillon, like a greyhound from his keeper's leash, and with an effort which almost overthrew him, Quentin sprung through a second and a third room, the last of which seemed to be the bedroom of the

Ladies of Croye. No living mortal was to be seen in either of them. He called upon the Lady Isabelle's name, at first gently, then more loudly, and then with an accent of despairing emphasis; but no answer was returned. He wrung his hands, tore his hair, and stamped on the earth with desperation. At length, a feeble glimmer of light, which shone through a crevice in the wainscoting of a dark nook in the bedroom, announced some recess or concealment behind the arras. Quentin hasted to examine it. He found there was indeed a concealed door, but it resisted his hurried efforts to open it. Heedless of the personal injury he might sustain, he rushed at the door with his whole force and weight of his body; and such was the impetus of an effort made betwixt hope and despair, that it would have burst much stronger fastenings.

He thus forced his way, almost headlong, into a small oratory, where a female figure, which had been kneeling in agonising supplication before the holy image, now sunk at length on the floor, under the new terrors implied in this approaching tumult. He hastily raised her from the ground, and, joy of joys! it was she whom he sought to save — the Countess Isabelle. He pressed her to his bosom — he conjured her to awake — entreated her to be of good cheer — for that she was now under the protection of one who had heart and hand enough to defend her against armies.

'Durward!' she said, as she at length collected herself, 'is it indeed you? Then there is some hope left. I thought all living and mortal friends had left me to my fate. Do not again abandon me.'

'Never — never!' said Durward. 'Whatever shall

happen — whatever danger shall approach, may I forfeit the benefits purchased by yonder blessed sign, if I be not the sharer of your fate until it is again a happy one!'

'Very pathetic and touching, truly,' said a rough, broken, asthmatic voice behind. 'A love affair, I see; and, from my soul, I pity the tender creature, as if she were my own Trudchen.'

'You must do more than pity us,' said Quentin, turning towards the speaker; 'you must assist in protecting us, Meinherr Pavillon. Be assured this lady was put under my especial charge by your ally the King of France; and, if you aid me not to shelter her from every species of offence and violence, your city will lose the favour of Louis of Valois. Above all, she must be guarded from the hands of William de la Marck.'

'That will be difficult,' said Pavillon, 'for these *schelms* of lanzknechts are very devils at rummaging out the wenches; but I'll do my best. We will to the other apartment, and there I will consider. It is but a narrow stair, and you can keep the door with a pike, while I look from the window, and get together some of my brisk boys of the curriers' guildry of Liege, that are as true as the knives they wear in their girdles. But first undo me these clasps; for I have not worn this corslet since the battle of St. Tron,[1] and I am three stone heavier since that time, if there be truth in Dutch beam and scale.'

The undoing of the iron inclosure gave great relief to the honest man, who, in putting it on, had more considered his zeal to the cause of Liege than his capacity

[1] See Note 3.

of bearing arms. It afterwards turned out that, being, as it were, borne forward involuntarily, and hoisted over the walls by his company as they thronged to the assault, the magistrate had been carried here and there, as the tide of attack and defence flowed or ebbed, without the power, latterly, of even uttering a word; until, as the sea casts a log of driftwood ashore in the first creek, he had been ultimately thrown down in the entrance to the Ladies of Croye's apartments, where the encumbrance of his own armour, with the superincumbent weight of two men slain in the entrance, and who fell above him, might have fixed him down long enough, had he been not relieved by Durward.

The same warmth of temper, which rendered Hermann Pavillon a hot-headed and intemperate zealot in politics, had the more desirable consequence of making him, in private, a good-tempered, kind-hearted man, who, if sometimes a little misled by vanity, was always well-meaning, and benevolent. He told Quentin to have an especial care of the poor pretty *yungfrau;* and, after this unnecessary exhortation, began to halloo from the window, 'Liege — Liege, for the gallant skinners' guild of curriers!'

One or two of his immediate followers collected at the summons, and at the peculiar whistle with which it was accompanied (each of the crafts having such a signal among themselves), and, more joining them, established a guard under the window from which their leader was bawling, and before the postern-door.

Matters seemed now settling into some sort of tranquillity. All opposition had ceased, and the leaders of the different classes of assailants were taking measures

to prevent indiscriminate plunder. The great bell was tolled, as summons to a military council, and its iron tongue, communicating to Liege the triumphant possession of Schonwaldt, by the insurgents, was answered by all the bells in that city, whose distant and clamorous voices seemed to cry, 'Hail to the victors!' It would have been natural, that Meinherr Pavillon should now have sallied from his fastness; but, either in reverent care of those whom he had taken under his protection, or perhaps for the better assurance of his own safety, he contented himself with despatching messenger on messenger, to command his lieutenant, Peterkin Geislaer, to attend him directly.

Peterkin came at length, to his great relief, as being the person upon whom, on all pressing occasions, whether of war, politics, or commerce, Pavillon was most accustomed to repose confidence. He was a stout, squat figure, with a square face and broad black eyebrows, that announced him to be opinionative and disputatious, — an advice-giving countenance, so to speak. He was endued with a buff jerkin, wore a broad belt and cutlass by his side, and carried a halberd in his hand.

'Peterkin, my dear lieutenant,' said his commander, 'this has been a glorious day — night, I should say; I trust thou art pleased for once?'

'I am well enough pleased that you are so,' said the doughty lieutenant; 'though I should not have thought of your celebrating the victory, if you call it one, up in this garret by yourself, when you are wanted in council.'

'But *am* I wanted there?' said the syndic.

'Ay, marry are you, to stand up for the rights of

Liege, that are in more danger than ever,' answered the lieutenant.

'Pshaw, Peterkin,' answered his principal, 'thou art ever such a frampold grumbler —'

'Grumbler! not I,' said Peterkin; 'what pleases other people will always please me. Only I wish we have not got King Stork, instead of King Log, like the *fabliau* that the clerk of St. Lambert's used to read us out of Meister Æsop's book.'

'I cannot guess your meaning, Peterkin,' said the syndic.

'Why then I tell you, Master Pavillon, that this Boar, or Bear, is like to make his own den of Schonwaldt, and 't is probable to turn out as bad a neighbour to our town as ever was the old bishop, and worse. Here has he taken the whole conquest in his own hand, and is only doubting whether he should be called prince or bishop; and it is a shame to see how they have mishandled the old man among them.'

'I will not permit it, Peterkin,' said Pavillon, bustling up; 'I disliked the mitre, but not the head that wore it. We are ten to one in the field, Peterkin, and will not permit these courses.'

'Ay, ten to one in the field, but only man to man in the castle; besides that Nikkel Blok the butcher, and all the rabble of the suburbs, take part with William de la Marck, partly for *saus* and *braus* (for he has broached all the ale-tubs and wine-casks), and partly for old envy towards us, who are the craftsmen, and have privileges.'

'Peter,' said Pavillon, 'we will go presently to the city. I will stay no longer in Schonwaldt.'

'But the bridges of this castle are up, master,' said

Geislaer; 'the gates locked, and guarded by these lanzknechts; and, if we were to try to force our way, these fellows, whose everyday business is war, might make wild work of us, that only fight of a holyday.'

'But why has he secured the gates?' said the alarmed burgher; 'or what business hath he to make honest men prisoners?'

'I cannot tell — not I,' said Peter. 'Some noise there is about the Ladies of Croye, who have escaped during the storm of the castle. That first put the Man with the Beard beside himself with anger, and now he 's beside himself with drink also.'

The burgomaster cast a disconsolate look towards Quentin, and seemed at a loss what to resolve upon. Durward, who had not lost a word of the conversation, which alarmed him very much, saw nevertheless that their only safety depended on his preserving his own presence of mind, and sustaining the courage of Pavillon. He struck boldly into the conversation, as one who had a right to have a voice in the deliberation. 'I am ashamed,' he said, 'Meinherr Pavillon, to observe you hesitate what to do on this occasion. Go boldly to William de la Marck, and demand free leave to quit the castle, you, your lieutenant, your squire, and your daughter. He can have no pretence for keeping you prisoner.'

'For me and my lieutenant — that is myself and Peter — good; but who is my squire?'

'I am, for the present,' replied the undaunted Scot.

'You!' said the embarrassed burgess; 'but are you not the envoy of King Louis of France?'

'True, but my message is to the magistrates of Liege, and only in Liege will I deliver it. Were I to acknow-

ledge my quality before William de la Marck, must I not enter into negotiations with him — ay, and, it is like, be detained by him? You must get me secretly out of the castle in the capacity of your squire.'

'Good — my squire. But you spoke of my daughter; my daughter is, I trust, safe in my house in Liege — where I wish her father was, with all my heart and soul.'

'This lady,' said Durward, 'will call you father while we are in this place.'

'And for my whole life afterwards,' said the countess, throwing herself at the citizen's feet and clasping his knees. 'Never shall the day pass in which I will not honour you, love you, and pray for you as a daughter for a father, if you will but aid me in this fearful strait. O, be not hard-hearted! think your own daughter may kneel to a stranger, to ask him for life and honour — think of this, and give *me* the protection you would wish *her* to receive!'

'In troth,' said the good citizen, much moved with her pathetic appeal, 'I think, Peter, that this pretty maiden hath a touch of our Trudchen's sweet look, — I thought so from the first; and that this brisk youth here, who is so ready with his advice, is somewhat like Trudchen's bachelor. I wager a groat, Peter, that this is a true-love matter, and it is a sin not to further it.'

'It were shame and sin both,' said Peter, a good-natured Fleming, notwithstanding all his self-conceit; and as he spoke he wiped his eyes with the sleeve of his jerkin.

'She *shall* be my daughter, then,' said Pavillon, 'well wrapped up in her black silk veil; and if there are not enough of true-hearted skinners to protect her, being the daughter of their syndic, it were pity they should

ever tug leather more. But hark ye, questions must be answered. How if I am asked what should my daughter make here at such an onslaught?'

'What should half the women in Liege make here when they followed us to the castle?' said Peter; 'they had no other reason, sure, but that it was just the place in the world that they should *not* have come to. Our *yungfrau* Trudchen has come a little farther than the rest, that is all.'

'Admirably spoken,' said Quentin: 'only be bold, and take this gentleman's good council, noble Meinherr Pavillon, and, at no trouble to yourself, you will do the most worthy action since the days of Charlemagne. Here, sweet lady, wrap yourself close in this veil,' for many articles of female apparel lay scattered about the apartment; 'be but confident, and a few minutes will place you in freedom and safety. Noble sir,' he added, addressing Pavillon, 'set forward.'

'Hold — hold — hold a minute,' said Pavillon, 'my mind misgives me! This De la Marck is a fury — a perfect boar in his nature as in his name; what if the young lady be one of those of Croye? and what if he discover her, and be addicted to wrath?'

'And if I were one of those unfortunate women,' said Isabelle, again attempting to throw herself at his feet, 'could you for that reject me in this moment of despair? Oh, that I had been indeed your daughter, or the daughter of the poorest burgher!'

'Not so poor — not so poor neither, young lady; we pay as we go,' said the citizen.

'Forgive me, noble sir,' again began the unfortunate maiden.

'Not noble, nor sir neither,' said the syndic; 'a plain burgher of Liege, that pays bills of exchange in ready guilders. But that is nothing to the purpose. Well, say you *be* a countess, I will protect you nevertheless.'

'You are bound to protect her, were she a duchess,' said Peter, 'having once passed your word.'

'Right, Peter, very right,' said the syndic; 'it is our old Low Dutch fashion, *ein wort, ein mann;* and now let us to this gear. We must take leave of this William de la Marck; and yet I know not, my mind misgives me when I think of him; and were it a ceremony which could be waived, I have no stomach to go through it.'

'Were you not better, since you have a force together, make for the gate and force the guard?' said Quentin.

But with united voice, Pavillon and his adviser exclaimed against the propriety of such an attack upon their ally's soldiers, with some hints concerning its rashness, which satisfied Quentin that it was not a risk to be hazarded with such associates. They resolved, therefore, to repair boldly to the great hall of the castle, where, as they understood, the Wild Boar of Ardennes held his feast, and demand free egress for the syndic of Liege and his company, a request too reasonable, as it seemed, to be denied. Still the good burgomaster groaned when he looked on his companions, and exclaimed to his faithful Peter, 'See what it is to have too bold and too tender a heart! Alas! Perkin, how much have courage and humanity cost me! and how much may I yet have to pay for my virtues before Heaven makes us free of this damned castle of Schonwaldt!'

As they crossed the courts, still strewed with the dying and dead, Quentin, while he supported Isabelle

through the scene of horrors, whispered to her courage and comfort, and reminded her that her safety depended entirely on her firmness and presence of mind.

'Not on mine — not on mine,' she said, 'but on yours — on yours only. O, if I but escape this fearful night, never shall I forget him who saved me! One favour more only let me implore at your hand, and I conjure you to grant it, by your mother's fame and your father's honour!'

'What is it you can ask that I could refuse?' said Quentin in a whisper.

'Plunge your dagger in my heart,' she said, 'rather than leave me captive in the hands of these monsters.'

Quentin's only answer was a pressure of the young countess's hand, which seemed as if, but for terror, it would have returned the caress. And, leaning on her youthful protector, she entered the fearful hall, preceded by Pavillon and his lieutenant, and followed by a dozen of the *kurschenschaft* or skinner's trade, who attended as a guard of honour on the syndic.

As they approached the hall, the yells of acclamation and bursts of wild laughter, which proceeded from it, seemed rather to announce the revel of festive demons rejoicing after some accomplished triumph over the human race than of mortal beings who had succeeded in a bold design. An emphatic tone of mind, which despair alone could have inspired, supported the assumed courage of the Countess Isabelle; undaunted spirits, which rose with the extremity, maintained that of Durward; while Pavillon and his lieutenant made a virtue of necessity, and faced their fate like bears bound to a stake, which must necessarily stand the dangers of the course.

CHAPTER XXII

THE REVELLERS

Cade. Where's Dick, the butcher of Ashford?
Dick. Here, sir.
Cade. They fell before thee like sheep and oxen; and thou behavedst thyself as if thou hadst been in thine own slaughter-house.

King Henry VI, Part II.

THERE could hardly exist a more strange and horrible change than had taken place in the castle-hall of Schonwaldt since Quentin had partaken of the noontide meal there; and it was indeed one which painted, in the extremity of their dreadful features, the miseries of war — more especially when waged by those most relentless of all agents, the mercenary soldiers of a barbarous age — men who, by habit and profession, had become familiarized with all that was cruel and bloody in the art of war, while they were devoid alike of patriotism and of the romantic spirit of chivalry.

Instead of the orderly, decent, and somewhat formal meal, at which civil and ecclesiastical officers had, a few hours before, sat mingled in the same apartment, where a light jest could only be uttered in a whisper, and where, even amid superfluity of feasting and of wine, there reigned a decorum which almost amounted to hypocrisy, there was now such a scene of wild and roaring debauchery as Satan himself, had he taken the chair as founder of the feast, could scarcely have improved.

At the head of the table sat, in the bishop's throne and state, which had been hastily brought thither from

his great council-chamber, the redoubted Boar of Ardennes himself, well deserving that dreaded name, in which he affected to delight, and which he did as much as he could think of to deserve. His head was unhelmeted, but he wore the rest of his ponderous and bright armour, which indeed he rarely laid aside. Over his shoulders hung a strong surcoat, made of the dressed skin of a huge wild boar, the hoofs being of solid silver and the tusks of the same. The skin of the head was so arranged that, drawn over the casque when the baron was armed, or over his bare head, in the fashion of a hood, as he often affected when the helmet was laid aside, and as he now wore it, the effect was that of a grinning, ghastly monster; and yet the countenance which it overshadowed scarce required such horrors to improve those which were natural to its ordinary expression.

The upper part of De la Marck's face, as nature had formed it, almost gave the lie to his character; for though his hair, when uncovered, resembled the rude and wild bristles of the hood he had drawn over it, yet an open, high, and manly forehead, broad ruddy cheeks, large, sparkling, light-coloured eyes, and a nose hooked like the beak of the eagle, promised something valiant and generous. But the effect of these more favourable traits was entirely overpowered by his habits of violence and insolence, which, joined to debauchery and intemperance, had stamped upon the features a character inconsistent with the rough gallantry which they would otherwise have exhibited. The former had, from habitual indulgence, swoln the muscles of the cheeks and those around the eyes, in particular the latter; evil practices

and habits had dimmed the eyes themselves, reddened the part of them that should have been white, and given the whole face a hideous likeness of the monster which it was the terrible baron's pleasure to resemble. But from an odd sort of contradiction, De la Marck, while he assumed in other respects the appearance of the wild boar, and even seemed pleased with the name, yet endeavoured, by the lengthened growth of his beard, to conceal the circumstance that had originally procured him that denomination. This was an unusual thickness and projection of the mouth and upper jaw, which, with the huge projecting side teeth, gave that resemblance to the bestial creation which, joined to the delight that De la Marck had in haunting the forest so called, originally procured for him the name of the Boar of Ardennes. The beard, broad, grisly, and uncombed, neither concealed the natural horrors of the countenance nor dignified its brutal expression.

The soldiers and officers sat around the table, intermixed with the men of Liege, some of them of the very lowest description; among whom Nikkel Blok, the butcher, placed near De la Marck himself, was distinguished by his tucked-up sleeves, which displayed arms smeared to the elbows with blood, as was the cleaver which lay on the table before him. The soldiers wore, most of them, their beards long and grisly, in imitation of their leader; had their hair plaited and turned upwards, in the manner that might best improve the natural ferocity of their appearance; and intoxicated, as many of them seemed to be, partly with the sense of triumph, and partly with the long libations of wine which they had been quaffing, presented a spectacle at once

hideous and disgusting. The language which they held, and the songs which they sung, without even pretending to pay each other the compliment of listening, were so full of license and blasphemy, that Quentin blessed God that the extremity of the noise prevented them from being intelligible to his companion.

It only remains to say, of the better class of burghers who were associated with William de la Marck's soldiers in this fearful revel, that the wan faces and anxious mien of the greater part showed that they either disliked their entertainment or feared their companions; while some of lower education, or a nature more brutal, saw only in the excesses of the soldier a gallant bearing, which they would willingly imitate, and the tone of which they endeavoured to catch so far as was possible, and stimulated themselves to the task by swallowing immense draughts of wine and *schwarzbier* — indulging a vice which at all times was too common in the Low Countries.

The preparations for the feast had been as disorderly as the quality of the company. The whole of the bishop's plate — nay, even that belonging to the service of the church, for the Boar of Ardennes regarded not the imputation of sacrilege — was mingled with blackjacks, or huge tankards made of leather, and drinking-horns of the most ordinary description.

One circumstance of horror remains to be added and accounted for; and we willingly leave the rest of the scene to the imagination of the reader. Amidst the wild license assumed by the soldiers of De la Marck, one who was excluded from the table — a lanzknecht, remarkable for his courage and for his daring behaviour during the storm of the evening — had impudently snatched

up a large silver goblet and carried it off, declaring it should atone for his loss of the share of the feast. The leader laughed till his sides shook at a jest so congenial to the character of the company; but when another, less renowned, it would seem, for audacity in battle, ventured on using the same freedom, De la Marck instantly put a check to a jocular practice which would soon have cleared his table of all the more valuable decorations. 'Ho! by the spirit of the thunder!' he exclaimed, 'those who dare not be men when they face the enemy must not pretend to be thieves among their friends. What! thou frontless dastard, thou — thou who didst wait for opened gate and lowered bridge, when Conrade Horst forced his way over moat and wall, must *thou* be malapert? Knit him up to the stanchions of the hall-window! He shall beat time with his feet while we drink a cup to his safe passage to the devil.'

The doom was scarce sooner pronounced than accomplished; and in a moment the wretch wrestled out his last agonies, suspended from the iron bars. His body still hung there when Quentin and the others entered the hall, and intercepting the pale moonbeam, threw on the castle-floor an uncertain shadow, which dubiously, yet fearfully, intimated the nature of the substance that produced it.

When the syndic Pavillon was announced from mouth to mouth in this tumultuous meeting, he endeavoured to assume, in right of his authority and influence, an air of importance and equality, which a glance at the fearful object at the window, and at the wild scene around him, rendered it very difficult for him to sustain, notwithstanding the exhortations of Peter, who whispered

in his ear, with some perturbation, 'Up heart, master, or we are but gone men!'

The syndic maintained his dignity, however, as well as he could, in a short address, in which he complimented the company upon the great victory gained by the soldiers of De la Marck and the good citizens of Liege.

'Ay,' answered De la Marck, sarcastically, 'we have brought down the game at last, quoth my lady's brach to the wolf-hound. But ho! sir burgomaster, you come like Mars, with beauty by your side. Who is this fair one? Unveil — unveil; no woman calls her beauty her own to-night.'

'It is my daughter, noble leader,' answered Pavillon; 'and I am to pray your forgiveness for her wearing a veil. She has a vow for that effect to the Three Blessed Kings.'

'I will absolve her of it presently,' said De la Marck; 'for here, with one stroke of a cleaver, will I consecrate myself Bishop of Liege; and I trust one living bishop is worth three dead kings.'

There was a shuddering and murmur among the guests; for the community of Liege, and even some of the rude soldiers, reverenced the Kings of Cologne, as they were commonly called, though they respected nothing else.

'Nay, I mean no treason against their defunct majesties,' said De la Marck; 'only bishop I am determined to be. A prince both secular and ecclesiastical, having power to bind and loose, will best suit a band of reprobates such as you, to whom no one else would give absolution. But come hither, noble burgomaster, sit beside me, when you shall see me make a vacancy for my own preferment. Bring in our predecessor in the holy seat.'

A bustle took place in the hall, while Pavillon, excusing himself from the proffered seat of honour, placed himself near the bottom of the table, his followers keeping close behind him, not unlike a flock of sheep which, when a stranger dog is in presence, may be sometimes seen to assemble in the rear of an old belwether, who is, from office and authority, judged by them to have rather more courage than themselves. Near the spot sat a very handsome lad, a natural son, as was said, of the ferocious De la Marck, and towards whom he sometimes showed affection, and even tenderness. The mother of the boy, a beautiful concubine, had perished by a blow dealt her by the ferocious leader in a fit of drunkenness or jealousy; and her fate had caused her tyrant as much remorse as he was capable of feeling. His attachment to the surviving orphan might be partly owing to these circumstances. Quentin, who had learned this point of the leader's character from the old priest, planted himself as close as he could to the youth in question; determined to make him, in some way or other, either a hostage or a protector, should other means of safety fail them.

While all stood in a kind of suspense, waiting the event of the orders which the tyrant had issued, one of Pavillon's followers whispered Peter, 'Did not our master call that wench his daughter? Why, it cannot be our Trudchen. This strapping lass is taller by two inches; and there is a black lock of hair peeps forth yonder from under her veil. By St. Michael of the market-place, you might as well call a black bullock's hide a white heifer's!'

'Hush! hush!' said Peter, with some presence of mind. 'What if our master hath a mind to steal a piece of doe-

venison out of the bishop's park here without our good dame's knowledge? And is it for thee or me to be a spy on him?'

'That will not I, brother,' answered the other, 'though I would not have thought of his turning deer-stealer at his years. *Sapperment* — what a shy fairy it is! See how she crouches down on yonder seat, behind folk's backs, to escape the gaze of the Marckers. But hold — hold; what are they about to do with the poor old bishop?'

As he spoke, the Bishop of Liege, Louis of Bourbon, was dragged into the hall of his own palace by the brutal soldiery. The dishevelled state of his hair, beard, and attire bore witness to the ill treatment he had already received; and some of his sacerdotal robes, hastily flung over him, appeared to have been put on in scorn and ridicule of his quality and character. By good fortune, as Quentin was compelled to think it, the Countess Isabelle, whose feelings at seeing her protector in such an extremity might have betrayed her own secret and compromised her safety, was so situated as neither to hear nor see what was about to take place; and Durward sedulously interposed his own person before her, so as to keep her from observing alike, and from observation.

The scene which followed was short and fearful. When the unhappy prelate was brought before the footstool of the savage leader, although in former life only remarkable for his easy and good-natured temper, he showed in his extremity a sense of his dignity and noble blood, well becoming the high race from which he was descended. His look was composed and undismayed; his gesture, when the rude hands which dragged him forward were unloosed, was noble, and at the same time

resigned, somewhat between the bearing of a feudal noble and of a Christian martyr; and so much was even De la Marck himself staggered by the firm demeanour of his prisoner, and recollection of the early benefits he had received from him, that he seemed irresolute, cast down his eyes, and it was not until he had emptied a large goblet of wine, that, resuming his haughty insolence of look and manner, he thus addressed his unfortunate captive: — 'Louis of Bourbon,' said the truculent soldier, drawing hard his breath, clenching his hands, setting his teeth, and using the other mechanical actions to rouse up and sustain his native ferocity of temper, 'I sought your friendship, and you rejected mine. What would you now give that it had been otherwise ? Nikkel, be ready.'

The butcher rose, seized his weapon, and stealing round behind De la Marck's chair, stood with it uplifted in his bare and sinewy arms.

'Look at that man, Louis of Bourbon,' said De la Marck again; 'what terms wilt thou now offer to escape this dangerous hour?'

The bishop cast a melancholy but unshaken look upon the grisly satellite, who seemed prepared to execute the will of the tyrant, and then he said with firmness, 'Hear me, William de la Marck; and good men all, if there be any here who deserve that name, hear the only terms I can offer to this ruffian. William de la Marck, thou hast stirred up to sedition an imperial city, hast assaulted and taken the palace of a prince of the Holy German Empire, slain his people, plundered his goods, maltreated his person; for this thou art liable to the ban of the Empire — hast deserved to be declared out-

lawed and fugitive, landless and rightless. Thou hast done more than all this. More than mere human laws hast thou broken, more than mere human vengeance hast thou deserved. Thou hast broken into the sanctuary of the Lord, laid violent hands upon a father of the church, defiled the house of God with blood and rapine, like a sacrilegious robber —'

'Hast thou yet done?' said De la Marck, fiercely interrupting him, and stamping with his foot.

'No,' answered the prelate, 'for I have not yet told thee the terms which you demanded to hear from me.'

'Go on,' said De la Marck; 'and let the terms please me better than the preface, or woe to thy grey head!' And flinging himself back in his seat, he grinded his teeth till the foam flew from his lips, as from the tusks of the savage animal whose name and spoils he wore.

'Such are thy crimes,' resumed the bishop, with calm determination; 'now hear the terms which, as a merciful prince and a Christian prelate, setting aside all personal offence, forgiving each peculiar injury, I condescend to offer. Fling down thy leading-staff, renounce thy command, unbind thy prisoners, restore thy spoil, distribute what else thou hast of goods to relieve those whom thou hast made orphans and widows, array thyself in sackcloth and ashes, take a palmer's staff in thy hand, and go barefooted on pilgrimage to Rome, and we will ourselves be intercessors for thee with the Imperial Chamber at Ratisbon for thy life, with our Holy Father the Pope for thy miserable soul.'

While Louis of Bourbon proposed these terms in a tone as decided as if he still occupied his episcopal throne, and as if the usurper kneeled a suppliant at his feet, the

tyrant slowly raised himself in his chair, the amazement with which he was at first filled giving way gradually to rage, until, as the bishop ceased, he looked to Nikkel Blok, and raised his finger, without speaking a word. The ruffian struck, as if he had been doing his office in the common shambles, and the murdered bishop sunk, without a groan, at the foot of his own episcopal throne.[1] The Liegeois, who were not prepared for so horrible a catastrophe, and who had expected to hear the conference end in some terms of accommodation, started up unanimously, with cries of execration, mingled with shouts of vengeance.

But William de la Marck, raising his tremendous voice above the tumult, and shaking his clenched hand and extended arm, shouted aloud, 'How now, ye porkers of Liege! ye wallowers in the mud of the Maes! do ye dare to mate yourselves with the Wild Boar of Ardennes? Up, ye Boar's brood! (an expression by which he himself and others often designated his soldiers), let these Flemish hogs see your tusks!'

Every one of his followers started up at the command, and mingled as they were among their late allies, prepared too for such a surprisal, each had, in an instant, his next neighbour by the collar, while his right hand brandished a broad dagger that glimmered against lamplight and moonshine. Every arm was uplifted, but no one struck; for the victims were too much surprised for resistance, and it was probably the object of De la Marck only to impose terror on his civic confederates.

But the courage of Quentin Durward, prompt and alert in resolution beyond his years, and stimulated at

[1] See Note 4.

the moment by all that could add energy to his natural shrewdness and resolution, gave a new turn to the scene. Imitating the action of the followers of De la Marck, he sprung on Carl Eberson, the son of their leader, and mastering him with ease, held his dirk at the boy's throat, while he exclaimed, 'Is that your game? then here I play my part.'

'Hold! hold!' exclaimed De la Marck, 'it is a jest — a jest. Think you I would injure my good friends and allies of the city of Liege? Soldiers, unloose your holds; sit down; take away the carrion (giving the bishop's corpse a thrust with his foot), which hath caused this strife among friends, and let us drown unkindness in a fresh carouse.'

All unloosened their holds, and the citizens and soldiers stood gazing on each other, as if they scarce knew whether they were friends or foes.

Quentin Durward took advantage of the moment. 'Hear me,' he said, 'William de la Marck, and you, burghers and citizens of Liege; and do you, young sir, stand still,' for the boy Carl was attempting to escape from his gripe, 'no harm shall befall you, unless another of these sharp jests shall pass round.'

'Who art thou, in the fiend's name,' said the astonished De la Marck, 'who art come to hold terms and take hostages from us in our own lair — from us, who exact pledges from others, but yield them to no one?'

'I am a servant of King Louis of France,' said Quentin boldly; 'an archer of the Scottish Guard, as my language and dress may partly tell you. I am here to behold and to report your proceedings; and I see with wonder that they are those of heathens rather than Christians —

of madmen rather than men possessed of reason. The hosts of Charles of Burgundy will be instantly in motion against you all; and if you wish assistance from France, you must conduct yourselves in a different manner. For you, men of Liege, I advise your instant return to your own city; and if there is any obstruction offered to your departure, I denounce those by whom it is so offered foes to my master, his most gracious Majesty of France.'

'France and Liege! France and Liege!' cried the followers of Pavillon, and several other citizens, whose courage began to rise at the bold language held by Quentin.

'France and Liege, and long live the gallant archer! We will live and die with him!'

William de la Marck's eyes sparkled, and he grasped his dagger as if about to launch it at the heart of the audacious speaker; but glancing his eye around, he read something in the looks of his soldiers, which even *he* was obliged to respect. Many of them were Frenchmen, and all of them knew the private support which William had received, both in men and in money, from that kingdom; nay, some of them were rather startled at the violent and sacrilegious action which had been just committed. The name of Charles of Burgundy, a person likely to resent to the utmost the deeds of that night, had an alarming sound, and the extreme impolicy of at once quarrelling with the Ligeois and provoking the monarch of France, made an appalling impression on their minds, confused as their intellects were. De la Marck, in short, saw he would not be supported, even by his own band, in any further act of immediate violence, and relaxing the terrors of his brow and eye, declared that 'he had

not the least design against his good friends of Liege, all of whom were at liberty to depart from Schonwaldt at their pleasure, although he had hoped they would revel one night with him, at least, in honour of their victory.' He added, with more calmness than he commonly used, that 'he would be ready to enter into negotiation concerning the partition of spoil, and the arrangement of measures for their mutual defence, either the next day or as soon after as they would. Meantime, he trusted that the Scottish gentleman would honour his feast by remaining all night at Schonwaldt.'

The young Scot returned his thanks, but said his motions must be determined by those of Pavillon, to whom he was directed particularly to attach himself; but that, unquestionably, he would attend him on his next return to the quarters of the valiant William de la Marck.

'If you depend on my motions,' said Pavillon, hastily and aloud, 'you are likely to quit Schonwaldt without an instant's delay; and, if you do not come back to Schonwaldt, save in my company, you are not likely to see it again in a hurry.'

This last part of the sentence the honest citizen muttered to himself, afraid of the consequences of giving audible vent to feelings which, nevertheless, he was unable altogether to suppress.

'Keep close about me, my brisk *kürschner* lads,' he said to his body-guard, 'and we will get as fast as we can out of this den of thieves.'

Most of the better classes of the Liegeois seemed to entertain similar opinions with the syndic, and there had been scarce so much joy amongst them at the obtaining

possession of Schonwaldt, as now seemed to arise from the prospect of getting safe out of it. They were suffered to leave the castle without opposition of any kind; and glad was Quentin when he turned his back on those formidable walls.

For the first time since they had entered that dreadful hall, Quentin ventured to ask the young countess how she did.

'Well — well,' she answered, in feverish haste, 'excellently well; do not stop to ask a question; let us not lose an instant in words. Let us fly — let us fly!'

She endeavoured to mend her pace as she spoke; but with so little success that she must have fallen from exhaustion had not Durward supported her. With the tenderness of a mother, when she conveys her infant out of danger, the young Scot raised his precious charge in his arms; and, while she encircled his neck with one arm, lost to every other thought save the desire of escaping, he would not have wished one of the risks of the night unencountered, since such had been the conclusion.

The honest burgomaster was, in his turn, supported and dragged forward by his faithful counsellor Peter and another of his clerks; and thus, in breathless haste, they reached the banks of the river, encountering many strolling bands of citizens, who were eager to know the event of the siege, and the truth of certain rumours already afloat, that the conquerors had quarreled among themselves.

Evading their curiosity as they best could, the exertions of Peter and some of his companions at length procured a boat for the use of the company, and with it an opportunity of enjoying some repose, equally wel-

come to Isabelle, who continued to lie almost motionless in the arms of her preserver, and to the worthy burgomaster, who, after delivering a broken string of thanks to Durward, whose mind was at the time too much occupied to answer him, began a long harangue, which he addressed to Peter, upon his own courage and benevolence, and the dangers to which these virtues had exposed him on this and other occasions.

'Peter — Peter,' he said, resuming the complaint of the preceding evening, 'if I had not had a bold heart, I would never have stood out against paying the burghers' twentieths, when every other living soul was willing to pay the same. Ay, and then a less stout heart had not seduced me into that other battle of St. Tron, where a Hainault man-at-arms thrust me into a muddy ditch with his lance, which neither heart nor hand that I had could help me out of till the battle was over. Ay, and then, Peter, this very night my courage seduced me, moreover, into too strait a corslet, which would have been the death of me but for the aid of this gallant young gentleman, whose trade is fighting, whereof I wish him heartily joy. And then for my tenderness of heart, Peter, it has made a poor man of me — that is, it would have made a poor man of me if I had not been tolerably well to pass in this wicked world; and Heaven knows what trouble it is like to bring on me yet, with ladies, countesses, and keeping of secrets, which, for aught I know, may cost me half my fortune, and my neck into the bargain!'

Quentin could remain no longer silent, but assured him that, whatever danger or damage he should incur on the part of the young lady now under his protection

should be thankfully acknowledged, and, as far as was possible, repaid.

'I thank you, young master squire archer — I thank you,' answered the citizen of Liege; 'but who was it told you that I desired any repayment at your hand for doing the duty of an honest man? I only regretted that it might cost me so and so; and I hope I may have leave to say so much to my lieutenant, without either grudging my loss or my peril.'

Quentin accordingly concluded that his present friend was one of the numerous class of benefactors to others, who take out their reward in grumbling, without meaning more than, by showing their grievances, to exalt a little the idea of the valuable service by which they have incurred them, and therefore prudently remained silent, and suffered the syndic to maunder on to his lieutenant concerning the risk and the loss he had encountered by his zeal for the public good, and his disinterested services to individuals, until they reached his own habitation.

The truth was, that the honest citizen felt that he had lost a little consequence, by suffering the young stranger to take the lead at the crisis which had occurred at the castle-hall of Schonwaldt; and, however delighted with the effect of Durward's interference at the moment, it seemed to him, on reflection, that he had sustained a diminution of importance, for which he endeavoured to obtain compensation, by exaggerating the claims which he had upon the gratitude of his country in general, his friends in particular, and more especially still, on the Countess of Croye and her youthful protector.

But when the boat stopped at the bottom of his gar-

den, and he had got himself assisted on shore by Peter, it seemed as if the touch of his own threshold had at once dissipated those feelings of wounded self-opinion and jealousy, and converted the discontented and obscured demagogue into the honest, kind, hospitable, and friendly host. He called loudly for Trudchen, who presently appeared; for fear and anxiety would permit few within the walls of Liege to sleep during that eventful night. She was charged to pay the utmost attention to the care of the beautiful and half-fainting stranger; and, admiring her personal charms, while she pitied her distress, Gertrude discharged the hospitable duty with the zeal and affection of a sister.

Late as it now was, and fatigued as the syndic appeared, Quentin, on his side, had difficulty to escape a flask of choice and costly wine, as old as the battle of Azincour; and must have submitted to take his share, however unwilling, but for the appearance of the mother of the family, whom Pavillon's loud summons for the keys of the cellar brought forth from her bedroom. She was a jolly little roundabout woman, who had been pretty in her time, but whose principal characteristics for several years had been a red and sharp nose, a shrill voice, and a determination that the syndic, in consideration of the authority which he exercised when abroad, should remain under the rule of due discipline at home.

So soon as she understood the nature of the debate between her husband and his guest, she declared roundly, that the former, instead of having occasion for more wine, had got too much already; and, far from using, in furtherance of his request, any of the huge bunch of keys which hung by a silver chain at her waist, she

turned her back on him without ceremony, and ushered Quentin to the neat and pleasant apartment in which he was to spend the night, amid such appliances to rest and comfort as probably he had till that moment been entirely a stranger to; so much did the wealthy Flemings excel, not merely the poor and rude Scots, but the French themselves, in all the conveniences of domestic life.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FLIGHT

Now bid me run,
And I will strive with things impossible;
Yea, get the better of them.
. . . . . .
Set on your foot,
And with a heart new-fired I follow you,
To do I know not what.

Julius Cæsar.

In spite of a mixture of joy and fear, doubt, anxiety, and other agitating passions, the exhausting fatigues of the preceding day were powerful enough to throw the young Scot into a deep and profound repose, which lasted until late on the day following; when his worthy host entered the apartment, with looks of care on his brow.

He seated himself by his guest's bedside, and began a long and complicated discourse upon the domestic duties of a married life, and especially upon the awful power and right supremacy which it became married men to sustain in all differences of opinion with their wives. Quentin listened with some anxiety. He knew that husbands, like other belligerent powers, were sometimes disposed to sing *Te Deum*, rather to conceal a defeat than to celebrate a victory; and he hastened to probe the matter more closely, 'by hoping their arrival had been attended with no inconvenience to the good lady of the household.'

'Inconvenience! no,' answered the burgomaster. 'No

woman can be less taken unawares than Mother Mabel — always happy to see her friends — always a clean lodging and a handsome meal ready for them, with God's blessing on bed and board. No woman on earth so hospitable; only 't is pity her temper is something particular.'

'Our residence here is disagreeable to her, in short?' said the Scot, starting out of bed, and beginning to dress himself hastily. 'Were I but sure that Lady Isabelle were fit for travel after the horrors of the last night, we would not increase the offence by remaining here an instant longer.'

'Nay,' said Pavillon, 'that is just what the young lady herself said to Mother Mabel; and truly I wish you saw the colour that came to her face as she said it — a milkmaid that has skated five miles to market against the frost-wind is a lily compared to it — I do not wonder Mother Mabel may be a little jealous, poor dear soul.'

'Has the Lady Isabelle then left her apartment?' said the youth, continuing his toilette operations with more despatch than before.

'Yes,' replied Pavillon; 'and she expects your approach with much impatience, to determine which way you shall go, since you both are determined on going. But I trust you will tarry breakfast?'

'Why did you not tell me this sooner?' said Durward impatiently.

'Softly — softly,' said the syndic; 'I have told it you too soon, I think, if it puts you into such a hasty fluster. Now I have some more matter for your ear, if I saw you had some patience to listen to me.'

'Speak it, worthy sir, as soon and as fast as you can; I listen devoutly.'

'Well, then,' resumed the burgomaster, 'I have but one word to say, and that is, that Trudchen, who is as sorry to part with yonder pretty lady as if she had been some sister of hers, wants you to take some other disguise; for there is word in the town that the Ladies of Croye travel the country in pilgrim's dresses, attended by a French life-guardsman, of the Scottish Archers; and it is said one of them was brought into Schonwaldt last night by a Bohemian after we had left it; and it was said still further, that this same Bohemian had assured William de la Marck that you were charged with no message either to him or to the good people of Liege, and that you had stolen away the young countess, and travelled with her as her paramour. And all this news hath come from Schonwaldt this morning; and it has been told to us and the other counsellors, who know not well what to advise; for though our own opinion is that William de la Marck has been a thought too rough both with the bishop and with ourselves, yet there is a great belief that he is a good-natured soul at bottom — that is, when he is sober — and that he is the only leader in the world to command us against the Duke of Burgundy — and, in truth, as matters stand, it is partly my own mind that we must keep fair with him, for we have gone too far to draw back.'

'Your daughter advises well,' said Quentin Durward, abstaining from reproaches or exhortations, which he saw would be alike unavailing to sway a resolution, which had been adopted by the worthy magistrate in compliance at once with the prejudices of his party and

the inclination of his wife; 'your daughter counsels well. We must part in disguise, and that instantly. We may, I trust, rely upon you for the necessary secrecy, and for the means of escape?'

'With all my heart — with all my heart,' said the honest citizen, who, not much satisfied with the dignity of his own conduct, was eager to find some mode of atonement. 'I cannot but remember that I owed you my life last night, both for unclasping that accursed steel doublet, and helping me through the other scrape, which was worse; for yonder Boar and his brood look more like devils than men. So I will be true to you as blade to haft, as our cutlers say, who are the best in the whole world. Nay, now you are ready, come this way; you shall see how far I can trust you.'

The syndic led him from the chamber in which he had slept to his own counting-room, in which he transacted his affairs of business; and after bolting the door, and casting a piercing and careful eye around him, he opened a concealed and vaulted closet behind the tapestry, in which stood more than one iron chest. He proceeded to open one which was full of guilders, and placed it at Quentin's discretion, to take whatever sum he might think necessary for his companion's expenses and his own.

As the money with which Quentin was furnished on leaving Plessis was now nearly expended, he hesitated not to accept the sum of two hundred guilders; and by doing so took a great weight from the mind of Pavillon, who considered the desperate transaction in which he thus voluntarily became the creditor, as an atonement for the breach of hospitality which various

considerations in a great measure compelled him to commit.

Having carefully locked his treasure-chamber, the wealthy Fleming next conveyed his guest to the parlour, where, in full possession of her activity of mind and body, though pale from the scenes of the preceding night, he found the countess attired in the fashion of a Flemish maiden of the middling class. No other was present except Trudchen, who was sedulously employed in completing the countess's dress, and instructing her how to bear herself. She extended her hand to him, which when he had reverently kissed, she said to him, 'Seignior Quentin, we must leave our friends here, unless I would bring on them a part of the misery which has pursued me ever since my father's death. You must change your dress and go with me, unless you also are tired of befriending a being so unfortunate.'

'I! — I tired of being your attendant! To the end of the earth will I guard you! But you — you yourself — are you equal to the task you undertake? Can you, after the terrors of last night —'

'Do not recall them to my memory,' answered the countess; 'I remember but the confusion of a horrid dream. Has the excellent bishop escaped?'

'I trust he is in freedom,' said Quentin, making a sign to Pavillon, who seemed about to enter on the dreadful narrative, to be silent.

'Is it possible for us to rejoin him? Hath he gathered any power?' said the lady.

'His only hopes are in Heaven,' said the Scot; 'but wherever you wish to go, I stand by your side, a determined guide and guard.'

'We will consider,' said Isabelle; and after a moment's pause, she added, 'A convent would be my choice, but that I fear it would prove a weak defense against those who pursue me.'

'Hem! hem!' said the syndic, 'I could not well recommend a convent within the district of Liege; because the Boar of Ardennes, though in the main a brave leader, a trusty confederate, and a well-wisher to our city, has, nevertheless, rough humours, and payeth, on the whole, little regard to cloisters, convents, nunneries, and the like. Men say that there are a score of nuns — that is, such as were nuns — who march always with his company.'

'Get yourself in readiness hastily, Seignior Durward,' said Isabelle, interrupting this detail, 'since to your faith I must needs commit myself.'

No sooner had the syndic and Quentin left the room than Isabelle began to ask of Gertrude various questions concerning the roads, and so forth, with such clearness of spirit and pertinence that the latter could not help exclaiming, 'Lady, I wonder at you! I have heard of masculine firmness, but yours appears to me more than belongs to humanity.'

'Necessity,' answered the countess — 'necessity, my friend, is the mother of courage, as of invention. No long time since, I might have fainted when I saw a drop of blood shed from a trifling cut; I have since seen life-blood flow around me, I may say, in waves, yet I have retained my senses and my self-possession. Do not think it was an easy task,' she added, laying on Gertrude's arm a trembling hand, although she still spoke with a firm voice; 'the little world within me is like a

garrison besieged by a thousand foes, whom nothing but the most determined resolution can keep from storming it on every hand, and at every moment. Were my situation one whit less perilous than it is — were I not sensible that my only chance to escape a fate more horrible than death is to retain my recollection and self-possession — Gertrude, I would at this moment throw myself into your arms, and relieve my bursting bosom by such a transport of tears and agony of terror as never rushed from a breaking heart!'

'Do not do so, lady!' said the sympathising Fleming; 'take courage, tell your beads, throw yourself on the care of Heaven; and surely, if ever Heaven sent a deliverer to one ready to perish, that bold and adventurous young gentleman must be designed for yours. There is one, too,' she added, blushing deeply, 'in whom I have some interest. Say nothing to my father; but I have ordered my bachelor, Hans Glover, to wait for you at the eastern gate, and never to see my face more, unless he brings word that he has guided you safe from the territory.'

To kiss her tenderly was the only way in which the young countess could express her thanks to the frank and kind-hearted city-maiden, who returned the embrace affectionately, and added, with a smile, 'Nay, if two maidens and their devoted bachelors cannot succeed in a disguise and an escape, the world is changed from what I am told it wont to be.'

A part of this speech again called the colour into the countess's pale cheeks, which was not lessened by Quentin's sudden appearance. He entered completely attired as a Flemish boor of the better class, in the holy-

day suit of Peter, who expressed his interest in the young Scot by the readiness with which he parted with it for his use; and swore, at the same time, that, were he to be curried and tugged worse than ever was bullock's hide, they should make nothing out of him, to the betraying of the young folks. Two stout horses had been provided by the activity of Mother Mabel, who really desired the countess and her attendant no harm, so that she could make her own house and family clear of the dangers which might attend upon harbouring them. She beheld them mount and go off with great satisfaction, after telling them that they would find their way to the east gate by keeping their eye on Peter, who was to walk in that direction as their guide, but without holding any visible communication with them.

The instant her guests had departed, Mother Mabel took the opportunity to read a long practical lecture to Trudchen upon the folly of reading romances, whereby the flaunting ladies of the court were grown so bold and venturous, that, instead of applying to learn some honest housewifery, they must ride, forsooth, a damsel-erranting through the country, with no better attendant than some idle squire, debauched page, or rakehelly archer from foreign parts, to the great danger of their health, the impoverishing of their substance, and the irreparable prejudice of their reputation.

All this Gertrude heard in silence, and without reply; but, considering her character, it might be doubted whether she derived from it the practical inference which it was her mother's purpose to enforce.

Meantime, the travellers had gained the eastern gate of the city, traversing crowds of people, who were for-

tunately too much busied in the political events and rumours of the hour to give any attention to a couple who had so little to render their appearance remarkable. They passed the guards in virtue of a permission obtained for them by Pavillon, but in the name of his colleague, Rouslaer, and they took leave of Peter Geislaer with a friendly though brief exchange of good wishes on either side. Immediately afterwards they were joined by a stout young man, riding a good grey horse, who presently made himself known as Hans Glover, the bachelor of Trudchen Pavillon. He was a young fellow with a good Flemish countenance — not, indeed, of the most intellectual cast, but arguing more hilarity and good-humour than wit, and, as the countess could not help thinking, scarce worthy to be bachelor to the generous Trudchen. He seemed, however, fully desirous to second the views which she had formed in their favour; for, saluting them respectfully, he asked of the countess in Flemish, on which road she desired to be conducted.

'Guide me,' said she, 'towards the nearest town on the frontiers of Brabant.'

'You have then settled the end and object of your journey?' said Quentin, approaching his horse to that of Isabelle, and speaking French, which their guide did not understand.

'Surely,' replied the young lady; 'for, situated as I now am, it must be of no small detriment to me if I were to prolong a journey in my present circumstances, even though the termination should be a rigorous prison.'

'A prison!' said Quentin.

'Yes, my friend, a prison; but I will take care that you shall not share it.'

'Do not talk — do not think of me,' said Quentin. 'Saw I you but safe, my own concerns are little worth minding.'

'Do not speak so loud,' said the Lady Isabelle; 'you will surprise our guide — you see he has already rode on before us'; for, in truth, the good-natured Fleming, doing as he desired to be done by, had removed from them the constraint of a third person, upon Quentin's first motion towards the lady. 'Yes,' she continued, when she noticed they were free from observation, 'to you, my friend, my protector — why should I be ashamed to call you what Heaven has made you to me? — to you it is my duty to say, that my resolution is taken to return to my native country, and to throw myself on the mercy of the Duke of Burgundy. It was mistaken, though well-meant, advice which induced me ever to withdraw from his protection, and place myself under that of the crafty and false Louis of France.'

'And you resolve to become the bride, then, of the Count of Campo-basso, the unworthy favourite of Charles?'

Thus spoke Quentin, with a voice in which internal agony struggled with his desire to assume an indifferent tone, like that of the poor condemned criminal, when, affecting a firmness which he is far from feeling, he asks if the death-warrant be arrived.

'No, Durward, no,' said the Lady Isabelle, sitting up erect in her saddle, 'to that hated condition all Burgundy's power shall not sink a daughter of the house of Croye. Burgundy may seize on my lands and fiefs, he

may imprison my person in a convent; but that is the worst I have to expect; and worse than that I will endure ere I give my hand to Campo-basso.'

'The worst!' said Quentin; 'and what worse can there be than plunder and imprisonment? Oh, think, while you have God's free air around you, and one by your side who will hazard life to conduct you to England, to Germany, even to Scotland, in all of which you shall find generous protectors. O, while this is the case, do not resolve so rashly to abandon the means of liberty, the best gift that Heaven gives! O, well sung a poet of my own land —

> Ah, freedom is a noble thing;
> Freedom makes man to have liking;
> Freedom the zest to pleasure gives;
> He lives at ease who freely lives.
> Grief, sickness, poortith, want, are all
> Summ'd up within the name of thrall.'

She listened with a melancholy smile to her guide's tirade in praise of liberty; and then answered after a moment's pause, 'Freedom is for man alone; woman must ever seek a protector, since nature made her incapable to defend herself. And where am I to find one? In that voluptuary Edward of England — in the inebriated Wenceslaus of Germany — in Scotland? Ah, Durward, were I your sister, and could you promise me shelter in some of those mountain-glens, which you love to describe, where, for charity, or for the few jewels I have preserved, I might lead an unharassed life, and forget the lot I was born to — could you promise me the protection of some honoured matron of the land — of some baron whose heart was as true as his sword —

that were indeed a prospect, for which it were worth the risk of further censure to wander farther and wider!'

There was a faltering tenderness of voice with which the Countess Isabelle made this admission, that at once filled Quentin with a sensation of joy, and cut him to the very heart. He hesitated a moment ere he made an answer, hastily reviewing in his mind the possibility there might be that he could procure her shelter in Scotland; but the melancholy truth rushed on him, that it would be alike base and cruel to point out to her a course which he had not the most distant power or means to render safe. 'Lady,' he said at last, 'I should act foully against my honour and oath of chivalry did I suffer you to ground any plan upon the thoughts that I have the power in Scotland to afford you other protection than that of the poor arm which is now by your side. I scarce know that my blood flows in the veins of an individual who now lives in my native land. The Knight of Innerquharity stormed our castle at midnight, and cut off all that belonged to my name. Were I again in Scotland, our feudal enemies are numerous and powerful, I single and weak; and even had the king a desire to do me justice, he dared not, for the sake of redressing the wrongs of a poor individual, provoke a chief who rides with five hundred horse.'

'Alas!' said the countess, 'there is then no corner of the world safe from oppression, since it rages as unrestrained amongst those wild hills which afford so few objects to covet, as in our rich and abundant lowlands!'

'It is a sad truth, and I dare not deny it,' said the Scot, 'that for little more than the pleasure of re-

venge and the lust of bloodshed, our hostile clans do the work of executioners on each other; and Ogilvies and the like act the same scenes in Scotland as De la Marck and his robbers do in this country.'

'No more of Scotland, then,' said Isabelle, with a tone of indifference, either real or affected — 'no more of Scotland, which indeed I mentioned but in jest, to see if you really dared recommend to me, as a place of rest, the most distracted kingdom in Europe. It was but a trial of your sincerity, which I rejoice to see may be relied on, even when your partialities are most strongly excited. So, once more, I will think of no other protection than can be afforded by the first honourable baron holding of Duke Charles, to whom I am determined to render myself.'

'And why not rather betake yourself to your own estates, and to your own strong castle, as you designed when at Tours?' said Quentin. 'Why not call around you the vassals of your father, and make treaty with Burgundy, rather than surrender yourself to him? Surely there must be many a bold heart that would fight in your cause; and I know at least of one who would willingly lay down his life to give example.'

'Alas!' said the countess, 'that scheme, the suggestion of the crafty Louis, and, like all which he ever suggested, designed more for his advantage than for mine, has become impracticable, since it was betrayed to Burgundy by the double traitor Zamet Maugrabin. My kinsman was then imprisoned, and my houses garrisoned. Any attempt of mine would but expose my dependents to the vengeance of Duke Charles; and why should I occasion more bloodshed than has already

taken place on so worthless an account? No, I will submit myself to my sovereign as a dutiful vassal, in all which shall leave my personal freedom of choice uninfringed; the rather that I trust my kinswoman, the Countess Hameline, who first counselled, and indeed urged my flight, has already taken this wise and honourable step.'

'Your kinswoman!' repeated Quentin, awakened to recollections to which the young countess was a stranger, and which the rapid succession of perilous and stirring events had, as matters of nearer concern, in fact banished from his memory.

'Ay, my aunt, the Countess Hameline of Croye — know you aught of her?' said the Countess Isabelle; 'I trust she is now under the protection of the Burgundian banner. You are silent! Know you aught of her?'

The last question, urged in a tone of the most anxious inquiry, obliged Quentin to give some account of what he knew of the countess's fate. He mentioned that he had been summoned to attend her in a flight from Liege, which he had no doubt the Lady Isabelle would be partaker in; he mentioned the discovery that had been made after they had gained the forest; and finally, he told his own return to the castle, and the circumstances in which he found it. But he said nothing of the views with which it was plain the Lady Hameline had left the castle of Schonwaldt, and as little about the floating report of her having fallen into the hands of William de la Marck. Delicacy prevented his even hinting at the one, and regard for the feelings of his companion, at a moment when strength and exertion were most demanded of her, prevented him from alluding

to the latter, which had, besides, only reached him as a mere rumour.

This tale, though abridged of those important particulars, made a strong impression on the Countess Isabelle, who, after riding some time in silence, said at last, with a tone of cold displeasure, 'And so you abandoned my unfortunate relative in a wild forest, at the mercy of a vile Bohemian and a traitorous waiting-woman? Poor kinswoman, thou wert wont to praise this youth's good faith!'

'Had I not done so, madam,' said Quentin, not unreasonably offended at the turn thus given to his gallantry, 'what had been the fate of one to whose service I was far more devoutly bound? Had I *not* left the Countess Hameline of Croye to the charge of those whom she had herself selected as counsellors and advisers, the Countess Isabelle had been ere now the bride of William de la Marck, the Wild Boar of Ardennes.'

'You are right,' said the Countess Isabelle, in her usual manner; 'and I, who have the advantage of your unhesitating devotion, have done you foul and ungrateful wrong. But oh, my unhappy kinswoman! and the wretch Marthon, who enjoyed so much of her confidence, and deserved it so little — it was she that introduced to my kinswoman the wretched Zamet and Hayraddin Maugrabin, who, by their pretended knowledge in soothsaying and astrology, obtained a great ascendency over her mind; it was she who, strengthening their predictions, encouraged her in — I know not what to call them — delusions concerning matches and lovers, which my kinswoman's age rendered ungraceful and improbable. I doubt not that, from the beginning,

we had been surrounded by these snares by Louis of France, in order to determine us to take refuge at his court, or rather to put ourselves into his power; after which rash act on our part, how unkingly, unknightly, ignobly, ungentlemanlike, he hath conducted himself towards us, you, Quentin Durward, can bear witness. But alas! my kinswoman — what think you will be her fate?'

Endeavouring to inspire hopes which he scarce felt, Durward answered, that 'The avarice of these people was stronger than any other passion; that Marthon, even when he left them, seemed to act rather as the Lady Hameline's protectress; and, in fine, that it was difficult to conceive any object these wretches could accomplish by the ill usage or murder of the countess, whereas they might be gainers by treating her well, and putting her to ransom.'

To lead the Countess Isabelle's thoughts from this melancholy subject, Quentin frankly told her the treachery of the Maugrabin, which he had discovered in the night-quarter near Namur, and which appeared the result of an agreement betwixt the King and William de la Marck. Isabelle shuddered with horror, and then recovering herself, said, 'I am ashamed, and I have sinned in permitting myself so far to doubt of the saints' protection, as for an instant to have deemed possible the accomplishment of a scheme so utterly cruel, base, and dishonourable, while there are pitying eyes in Heaven to look down on human miseries. It is not a thing to be thought of with fear or abhorrence, but to be rejected as such a piece of incredible treachery and villainy as it were atheism to believe could ever be successful. But I

now see plainly why that hypocritical Marthon often seemed to foster every seed of petty jealousy or discontent betwixt my poor kinswoman and myself, whilst she always mixed with flattery, addressed to the individual who was present, whatever could prejudice her against her absent kinswoman. Yet never did I dream she could have proceeded so far as to have caused my once affectionate kinswoman to have left me behind in the perils of Schonwaldt, while she made her own escape.'

'Did the Lady Hameline not mention to you, then,' said Quentin, 'her intended flight?'

'No,' replied the countess, 'but she alluded to some communication which Marthon was to make to me. To say truth, my poor kinswoman's head was so turned by the mysterious jargon of the miserable Hayraddin, whom that day she had admitted to a long and secret conference, and she threw out so many strange hints, that — that — in short, I cared not to press on her, when in that humour, for any explanation. Yet it was cruel to leave me behind her.'

'I will excuse the Lady Hameline from intending such unkindness,' said Quentin; 'for such was the agitation of the moment, and the darkness of the hour, that I believed the Lady Hameline as certainly conceived herself accompanied by her niece, as I at the same time, deceived by Marthon's dress and demeanour, supposed I was in the company of both the Ladies of Croye — and of *her* especially,' he added, with a low but determined voice, 'without whom the wealth of worlds would not have tempted me to leave Schonwaldt.'

Isabelle stooped her head forward, and seemed scarce to hear the emphasis with which Quentin had spoken.

But she turned her face to him again when he began to speak of the policy of Louis; and it was not difficult for them, by mutual communication, to ascertain that the Bohemian brothers, with their accomplice Marthon, had been the agents of that crafty monarch, although Zamet, the elder of them, with a perfidy peculiar to his race, had attempted to play a double game, and had been punished accordingly. In the same humour of mutual confidence, and forgetting the singularity of their own situation, as well as the perils of the road, the travellers pursued their journey for several hours, only stopping to refresh their horses at a retired *dorff*, or hamlet, to which they were conducted by Hans Glover, who, in all other respects, as well as in leaving them much to their own freedom in conversation, conducted himself like a person of reflection and discretion.

Meantime, the artificial distinction which divided the two lovers, for such we may now term them, seemed dissolved, or removed, by the circumstances in which they were placed; for if the countess boasted the higher rank, and was by birth entitled to a fortune incalculably larger than that of the youth, whose revenue lay in his sword, it was to be considered that, for the present, she was as poor as he, and for her safety, honour, and life exclusively indebted to his presence of mind, valour, and devotion. They *spoke* not indeed of love, for though the young lady, her heart full of gratitude and confidence, might have pardoned such a declaration, yet Quentin, on whose tongue there was laid a check, both by natural timidity and by the sentiments of chivalry, would have held it an unworthy abuse of her situation had he said anything which could have the appearance

of taking undue advantage of the opportunities which it afforded them. They *spoke* not then of love, but the thoughts of it were on both sides unavoidable; and thus they were placed in that relation to each other in which sentiments of mutual regard are rather understood than announced, and which, with the freedoms which it permits, and the uncertainties that attend it, often forms the most delightful hours of human existence, and as frequently leads to those which are darkened by disappointment, fickleness, and all the pains of blighted hope and unrequited attachment.

It was two hours after noon, when the travellers were alarmed by the report of the guide, who, with paleness and horror in his countenance, said that they were pursued by a party of De la Marck's *Schwarzreiters*. These soldiers, or rather banditti, were bands levied in the Lower Circles of Germany, and resembled the lanzknechts in every particular, except that the former acted as light cavalry. To maintain the name of Black Troopers, and to strike additional terror into their enemies, they usually rode on black chargers, and smeared with black ointment their arms and accoutrements, in which operation their hands and faces often had their share. In morals and in ferocity these schwarzreiters emulated their pedestrian brethren the lanzknechts.[1]

On looking back, and discovering along the long level road which they had traversed a cloud of dust advancing, with one or two of the headmost troopers riding furiously in front of it, Quentin addressed his companion, 'Dearest Isabelle, I have no weapon left save my sword; but since I cannot fight for you, I will fly with you. Could

[1] See Note 5.

we gain yonder wood that is before us ere they come up, we may easily find means to escape.'

'So be it, my only friend,' said Isabelle, pressing her horse to the gallop; 'and thou, good fellow,' she added, addressing Hans Glover, 'get thee off to another road, and do not stay to partake our misfortune and danger.'

The honest Fleming shook his head, and answered her generous exhortation with '*Nein, nein! das geht nicht*,'[1] and continued to attend them, all three riding towards the shelter of the wood as fast as their jaded horses could go, pursued, at the same time, by the schwarzreiters, who increased their pace when they saw them fly. But notwithstanding the fatigue of the horses, still the fugitives, being unarmed, and riding lighter in consequence, had considerably the advantage of the pursuers, and were within about a quarter of a mile of the wood, when a body of men-at-arms, under a knight's pennon, was discovered advancing from the cover, so as to intercept their flight.

'They have bright armour,' said Isabelle; 'they must be Burgundians. Be they who they will, we must yield to them, rather than to the lawless miscreants who pursue us.'

A moment after she exclaimed, looking on the pennon, 'I know the cloven heart which it displays! It is the banner of the Count of Crèvecœur, a noble Burgundian; to him I will surrender myself.'

Quentin Durward sighed; but what other alternative remained? and how happy would he have been but an instant before, to have been certain of the escape of Isabelle, even under worse terms? They soon joined the

[1] 'No, no! that must not be.'

band of Crèvecœur, and the countess demanded to speak to the leader, who had halted his party till he should reconnoitre the black troopers; and as he gazed on her with doubt and uncertainty, she said, 'Noble count, Isabelle of Croye, the daughter of your old companion in arms, Count Reinold of Croye, renders herself, and asks protection from your valour for her and hers.'

'Thou shalt have it, fair kinswoman, were it against a host, always excepting my liege Lord of Burgundy. But there is little time to talk of it. These filthy-looking fiends have made a halt, as if they intended to dispute the matter. By St. George of Burgundy, they have the insolence to advance against the banner of Crèvecœur! What! will not the knaves be ruled? Damian, my lance. Advance banner. Lay your spears in the rest. Crèvecœur to the rescue!'

Crying his war-cry, and followed by his men-at-arms, he galloped rapidly forward to charge the schwarzreiters.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE SURRENDER

Rescue or none, sir knight, I am your captive;
Deal with me what your nobleness suggests,
Thinking the chance of war may one day place you
Where I must now be reckon'd — i' the roll
Of melancholy prisoners.

Anonymous.

THE skirmish betwixt the schwarzreiters and the Burgundian men-at-arms lasted scarcely five minutes, so soon were the former put to rout by the superiority of the latter in armour, weight of horse, and military spirit. In less than the space we have mentioned, the Count of Crèvecœur, wiping his bloody sword upon his horse's mane ere he sheathed it, came back to the verge of the forest, where Isabelle had remained a spectator of the combat. One part of his people followed him, while the other continued to pursue the flying enemy for a little space along the causeway.

'It is a shame,' said the count, 'that the weapons of knights and gentlemen should be soiled by the blood of those brutal swine.'

So saying, he returned his weapon to the sheath, and added, 'This is a rough welcome to your home, my pretty cousin; but wandering princesses must expect such adventures. And well I came up in time, for, let me assure you, the black troopers respect a countess's coronet as little as a country wench's coif, and I think your retinue is not qualified for much resistance.'

'My lord count,' said the Lady Isabelle, 'without further preface, let me know if I am a prisoner, and where are you to conduct me.'

'You know, you silly child,' answered the count, 'how I would answer that question, did it rest on my own will. But you and your foolish match-making marriage-hunting aunt have made such wild use of your wings of late, that I fear you must be contented to fold them up in a cage for a little while. For my part, my duty, and it is a sad one, will be ended when I have conducted you to the court of the Duke, at Péronne; for which purpose I hold it necessary to deliver the command of this reconnoitring party to my nephew, Count Stephen, while I return with you thither, as I think you may need an intercessor. And I hope the young giddy-pate will discharge his duty wisely.'

'So please you, fair uncle,' said Count Stephen, 'if you doubt my capacity to conduct the men-at-arms, even remain with them yourself, and I will be the servant and guard of the Countess Isabelle of Croye.'

'No doubt, fair nephew,' answered his uncle, 'this were a goodly improvement on my scheme; but methinks I like it as well in the way I planned it. Please you, therefore, to take notice, that your business here is not to hunt after and stick these black hogs, for which you seemed but now to have felt an especial vocation, but to collect and bring to me true tidings what is going forward in the country of Liege, concerning which we hear such wild rumours. Let some half score of lances follow me, and the rest remain with my banner under your guidance.'

'Yet one moment, cousin of Crèvecœur,' said the

Countess Isabelle, 'and let me, in yielding myself prisoner, stipulate at least for the safety of those who have befriended me in my misfortunes. Permit this good fellow, my trusty guide, to go back unharmed to his native town of Liege.'

'My nephew,' said Crèvecœur, after looking sharply at Glover's honest breadth of countenance, 'shall guard this good fellow, who seems, indeed, to have little harm in him, as far into the territory as he himself advances, and then leave him at liberty.'

'Fail not to remember me to the kind Gertrude,' said the countess to her guide; and added, taking a string of pearls from under her veil, 'Pray her to wear this in remembrance of her unhappy friend.'

Honest Glover took the string of pearls, and kissed, with clownish gesture but with sincere kindness, the fair hand which had found such a delicate mode of remunerating his own labours and peril.

'Umph! signs and tokens!' said the count; 'any further bequests to make, my fair cousin? It is time we were on our way.'

'Only,' said the countess, making an effort to speak, 'that you will be pleased to be favourable to this — this young gentleman.'

'Umph!' said Crèvecœur, casting the same penetrating glance on Quentin which he had bestowed on Glover, but apparently with a much less satisfactory result, and mimicking, though not offensively, the embarrassment, of the countess — 'umph! Ay, this is a blade of another temper. And pray, my cousin, what has this — this *very* young gentleman done to deserve intercession at your hands?'

'He has saved my life and honour,' said the countess, reddening with shame and resentment.

Quentin also blushed with indignation, but wisely concluded that to give vent to it might only make matters worse.

'Life and honour! Umph!' said again the Count Crèvecœur; 'methinks it would have been as well, my cousin, if you had not put yourself in the way of lying under such obligations to this very young gentleman. But let it pass. The young gentleman may wait on us, if his quality permit, and I will see he has no injury; only I will myself take in future the office of protecting your life and honour, and may perhaps find for him some fitter duty than that of being a squire of the body to damosels errant.'

'My lord count,' said Durward, unable to keep silence any longer, 'lest you should talk of a stranger in slighter terms than you might afterwards think becoming, I take leave to tell you that I am Quentin Durward, an archer of the Scottish Body-Guard, in which, as you well know, none but gentlemen and men of honour are enrolled.'

'I thank you for your information, and I kiss your hands, seignior archer,' said Crèvecœur, in the same tone of raillery. 'Have the goodness to ride with me to the front of the party.'

As Quentin moved onward at the command of the count, who had now the power, if not the right, to dictate his motions, he observed that the Lady Isabelle followed his motions with a look of anxious and timid interest, which amounted almost to tenderness, and the sight of which brought water into his eyes. But he remembered that he had a man's part to sustain before

Crèvecœur, who, perhaps, of all the chivalry in France or Burgundy, was the least likely to be moved to anything but laughter by a tale of true-love sorrow. He determined, therefore, not to wait his addressing him, but to open the conversation in a tone which should assert his claim to fair treatment, and to more respect than the count, offended perhaps at finding a person of such inferior note placed so near the confidence of his high-born and wealthy cousin, seemed disposed to entertain for him.

'My Lord Count of Crèvecœur,' he said in a temperate but firm tone of voice, 'may I request of you, before our interview goes further, to tell me if I am at liberty, or am to account myself your prisoner?'

'A shrewd question,' replied the count, 'which, at present, I can only answer by another. Are France and Burgundy, think you, at peace or war with each other?'

'That,' replied the Scot, 'you, my lord, should certainly know better than I. I have been absent from the court of France, and have heard no news for some time.'

'Look you there,' said the count; 'you see how easy it is to ask questions, but how difficult to answer them. Why, I myself, who have been at Péronne with the Duke for this week and better, cannot resolve this riddle any more than you; and yet, sir squire, upon the solution of that question depends the said point whether you are prisoner or free man; and, for the present, I must hold you as the former. Only, if you have really and honestly been of service to my kinswoman, and if you are candid in your answers to the questions I shall ask, affairs shall stand the better with you.'

'The Countess of Croye,' said Quentin, 'is best judge

if I have rendered any service, and to her I refer you on that matter. My answers you will yourself judge of when you ask me your questions.'

'Umph! haughty enough,' muttered the Count of Crèvecœur, 'and very like one that wears a lady's favour in his hat, and thinks he must carry things with a high tone, to honour the precious remnant of silk and tinsel. Well, sir, I trust it will be no abatement of your dignity if you answer me how long you have been about the person of the Lady Isabelle of Croye?'

'Count of Crèvecœur,' said Quentin Durward, 'if I answer questions which are asked in a tone approaching towards insult, it is only lest injurious inferences should be drawn from my silence respecting one to whom we are both obliged to render justice. I have acted as escort to the Lady Isabelle since she left France to retire into Flanders.'

'Ho! ho!' said the count; 'and that is to say, since she fled from Plessis-lès-Tours? You, an archer of the Scottish Guard, accompanied her, of course, by the express orders of King Louis?'

However little Quentin thought himself indebted to the King of France, who, in contriving the surprisal of the Countess Isabelle by William de la Marck, had probably calculated on the young Scotchman being slain in her defence, he did not yet conceive himself at liberty to betray any trust which Louis had reposed, or had seemed to repose, in him, and therefore replied to Count Crèvecœur's inference, 'That it was sufficient for him to have the authority of his superior officer for what he had done, and he inquired no further.'

'It is quite sufficient,' said the count. 'We know the

King does not permit his officers to send the archers of his Guard to prance like paladins by the bridle-rein of wandering ladies, unless he hath some politic purpose to serve. It will be difficult for King Louis to continue to aver so boldly that he knew not of the Ladies of Croye's having escaped from France, since they were escorted by one of his own life-guard. And whither, sir archer, was your retreat directed?'

'To Liege, my lord,' answered the Scot; 'where the ladies desired to be placed under the protection of the late bishop.'

'The *late* bishop!' exclaimed the Count of Crèvecœur; 'is Louis of Bourbon dead? Not a word of his illness had reached the Duke. Of what did he die?'

'He sleeps in a bloody grave, my lord — that is, if his murderers have conferred one on his remains.'

'Murdered!' exclaimed Crèvecœur again. 'Holy Mother of Heaven! Young man, it is impossible!'

'I saw the deed done with my own eyes, and many an act of horror besides.'

'Saw it, and made not in to help the good prelate!' exclaimed the count, 'or to raise the castle against his murderers? Know'st thou not, that even to look on such a deed, without resisting it, is profane sacrilege?'

'To be brief, my lord,' said Durward, 'ere this act was done, the castle was stormed by the bloodthirsty William de la Marck, with help of the insurgent Liegeois.'

'I am struck with thunder!' said Crèvecœur. 'Liege in insurrection! Schonwaldt taken! The bishop murdered! Messenger of sorrow, never did one man unfold such a packet of woes! Speak — knew you of this assault

— of this insurrection — of this murder? Speak — thou art one of Louis's trusted archers, and it is he that has aimed this painful arrow. Speak, or I will have thee torn with wild horses!'

'And if I *am* so torn, my lord, there can be nothing rent out of me that may not become a true Scottish gentleman. I know no more of these villainies than you — was so far from being partaker in them, that I would have withstood them to the uttermost, had my means, in a twentieth degree, equalled my inclination. But what could I do? they were hundreds and I but one. My only care was to rescue the Countess Isabelle, and in that I was happily successful. Yet, had I been near enough when the ruffian deed was so cruelly done on the old man, I had saved his grey hairs, or I had avenged them; and as it was, my abhorrence was spoken loud enough to prevent other horrors.'

'I believe thee, youth,' said the count; 'thou art neither of an age nor nature to be trusted with such bloody work, however well fitted to be the squire of dames. But alas! for the kind and generous prelate, to be murdered on the hearth where he so often entertained the stranger with Christian charity and princely bounty; and that by a wretch — a monster — a portentous growth of blood and cruelty — bred up in the very hall where he has imbrued his hands in his benefactor's blood! But I know not Charles of Burgundy — nay, I should doubt of the justice of Heaven — if vengeance be not as sharp, and sudden, and severe as this villainy has been unexampled in atrocity. And, if no other shall pursue the murderer' — here he paused, grasped his sword, then quitting his bridle, struck both gauntleted hands upon

his breast, until his corslet clattered, and finally held them up to Heaven, as he solemnly continued — 'I — I, Philip Crèvecœur of Cordès, make a vow to God, St. Lambert, and the Three Kings of Cologne, that small shall be my thought of other earthly concerns till I take full revenge on the murderers of the good Louis of Bourbon, whether I find them in forest or field, in city or in country, in hill or plain, in king's court or in God's church; and thereto I pledge lands and living, friends and followers, life and honour. So help me God and St. Lambert of Liege, and the Three Kings of Cologne!'

When the Count of Crèvecœur had made his vow, his mind seemed in some sort relieved from the overwhelming grief and astonishment with which he had heard the fatal tragedy that had been acted at Schonwaldt, and he proceeded to question Durward more minutely concerning the particulars of that disastrous affair, which the Scot, nowise desirous to abate the spirit of revenge which the count entertained against William de la Marck, gave him at full length.

'But those blind, unsteady, faithless, fickle beasts, the Liegeois,' said the count, 'that they should have combined themselves with this inexorable robber and murderer to put to death their lawful prince!'

Durward here informed the enraged Burgundian that the Liegeois, or at least the better class of them, however rashly they had run into the rebellion against their bishop, had no design, so far as appeared to him, to aid in the execrable deed of De la Marck; but, on the contrary, would have prevented it if they had had the means, and were struck with horror when they beheld it.

'Speak not of the faithless, inconstant, plebeian rabble!' said Crèvecœur. 'When they took arms against a prince who had no fault save that he was too kind and too good a master for such a set of ungrateful slaves — when they armed against him, and broke into his peaceful house, what could there be in their intention but murder? When they banded themselves with the Wild Boar of Ardennes, the greatest homicide in the marches of Flanders, what else could there be in their purpose *but* murder, which is the very trade he lives by? And again, was it not one of their own vile rabble who did the very deed, by thine own account? I hope to see their canals running blood by the light of their burning houses. Oh, the kind, noble, generous lord whom they have slaughtered! Other vassals have rebelled under the pressure of imposts and penury; but the men of Liege in the fulness of insolence and plenty.' He again abandoned the reins of his war-horse and wrung bitterly the hands which his mail-gloves rendered untractable. Quentin easily saw that the grief which he manifested was augmented by the bitter recollection of past intercourse and friendship with the sufferer, and was silent accordingly, respecting feelings which he was unwilling to aggravate, and at the same time felt it impossible to soothe.

But the Count of Crèvecœur returned again and again to the subject — questioned him on every particular of the surprise of Schonwaldt, and the death of the bishop; and then suddenly, as if he had recollected something which had escaped his memory, demanded what had become of the Lady Hameline, and why she was not with her kinswoman. 'Not,' he added contemptuously, 'that

I consider her absence as at all a loss to the Countess Isabelle; for, although she was her kinswoman, and upon the whole a well-meaning woman, yet the court of Cocagne never produced such a fantastic fool; and I hold it for certain that her niece, whom I have always observed to be a modest and orderly young woman, was led into the absurd frolic of flying from Burgundy to France by that blundering, romantic, old match-making and match-seeking idiot.'

What a speech for a romantic lover to hear! and to hear, too, when it would have been ridiculous in him to attempt what it was impossible for him to achieve — namely, to convince the count, by force of arms, that he did foul wrong to the countess — the peerless in sense as in beauty — in terming her a modest and orderly young woman, qualities which might have been predicated with propriety of the daughter of a sunburnt peasant, who lived by goading the oxen, while her father held the plough. And, then, to suppose her under the domination and supreme guidance of a silly and romantic aunt — the slander should have been repelled down the slanderer's throat. But the open, though severe, physiognomy of the Count of Crèvecœur, the total contempt which he seemed to entertain for those feelings which were uppermost in Quentin's bosom, overawed him; not for fear of the count's fame in arms — that was a risk which would have increased his desire of making out a challenge — but in dread of ridicule, the weapon of all others most feared by enthusiasts of every description, and which, from its predominance over such minds, often checks what is absurd, and fully as often smothers that which is noble.

Under the influence of this fear of becoming an object of scorn rather than resentment, Durward, though with some pain, confined his reply to a confused account of the Lady Hameline having made her escape from Schonwaldt before the attack took place. He could not, indeed, have made his story very distinct without throwing ridicule on the near relation of Isabelle, and perhaps incurring some himself, as having been the object of her preposterous expectations. He added to his embarrassed detail, that he had heard a report, though a vague one, of the Lady Hameline having again fallen into the hands of William de la Marck.

'I trust in St. Lambert that he will marry her,' said Crèvecœur; 'as, indeed, he is likely enough to do, for the sake of her money-bags; and equally likely to knock her on the head so soon as these are either secured in his own grasp or, at farthest, emptied.'

The count then proceeded to ask so many questions concerning the mode in which both ladies had conducted themselves on the journey, the degree of intimacy to which they admitted Quentin himself, and other trying particulars, that, vexed and ashamed and angry, the youth was scarce able to conceal his embarrassment from the keen-sighted soldier and courtier, who seemed suddenly disposed to take leave of him, saying, at the same time, 'Umph — I see it is as I conjectured, on one side at least; I trust the other party has kept her senses better. Come, sir squire, spur on and keep the van, while I fall back to discourse with the Lady Isabelle. I think I have learned now so much from you that I can talk to her of these sad passages without hurting her nicety, though I have fretted yours a little. Yet stay, young gallant —

one word ere you go. You have had, I imagine, a happy journey through Fairyland — all full of heroic adventure, and high hope, and wild, minstrel-like delusion, like the gardens of *Morgaine la Fée*. Forget it all, young soldier,' he added, tapping him on the shoulder. 'Remember yonder lady only as the honoured Countess of Croye; forget her as a wandering and adventurous damsel. And her friends — one of them I can answer for — will remember, on their part, only the services you have done her, and forget the unreasonable reward which you have had the boldness to propose to yourself.'

Enraged that he had been unable to conceal from the sharp-sighted Crèvecœur feelings which the count seemed to consider as the object of ridicule, Quentin replied indignantly, 'My lord count, when I require advice of you, I will ask it; when I demand assistance of you, it will be time enough to grant or refuse it; when I set peculiar value on your opinion of me, it will not be too late to express it.'

'Heyday!' said the count; 'I have come between Amadis and Oriana, and must expect a challenge to the lists!'

'You speak as if that were an impossibility,' said Quentin. 'When I broke a lance with the Duke of Orleans, it was against a breast in which flowed better blood than that of Crèvecœur. When I measured swords with Dunois, I engaged a better warrior.'

'Now Heaven nourish thy judgment, gentle youth!' said Crèvecœur, still laughing at the chivalrous *inamorato*. 'If thou speak'st truth, thou hast had singular luck in this world; and, truly, if it be the pleasure of Providence exposes thee to such trials, without a beard

on thy lip, thou wilt be mad with vanity ere thou writest thyself a man. Thou canst not move me to anger, though thou mayst to mirth. Believe me, though thou mayst have fought with princes, and played the champion for countesses, by some of those freaks which Fortune will sometimes exhibit, thou art by no means the equal of those of whom thou hast been either the casual opponent or more casual companion. I can allow thee, like a youth who hath listened to romances till he fancied himself a paladin, to form pretty dreams for some time; but thou must not be angry at a well-meaning friend, though he shake thee something roughly by the shoulders to awake thee.'

'My lord of Crèvecœur,' said Quentin, 'my family —'

'Nay, it was not utterly of family that I spoke,' said the count; 'but of rank, fortune, high station, and so forth, which place a distance between various degrees and classes of persons. As for birth, all men are descended from Adam and Eve.'

'My lord count,' repeated Quentin, 'my ancestors, the Durwards of Glen Houlakin —'

'Nay,' said the count, 'if you claim a farther descent for them than from Adam, I have done! Good-even to you.'

He reined back his horse, and paused to join the countess, to whom, if possible, his insinuations and advices, however well meant, were still more disagreeable than to Quentin, who, as he rode on, muttered to himself, 'Cold-blooded, insolent, overweening coxcomb! Would that the next Scottish archer who has his harquebuss pointed at thee may not let thee off so easily as I did!'

In the evening they reached the town of Charleroi, on the Sambre, where the Count of Crèvecœur had determined to leave the Countess Isabelle, whom the terror and fatigue of yesterday, joined to a flight of fifty miles since morning and the various distressing sensations by which it was accompanied, had made incapable of travelling farther, with safety to her health. The count consigned her, in a state of great exhaustion, to the care of the abbess of the Cistercian convent in Charleroi, a noble lady to whom both the families of Crèvecœur and Croye were related, and in whose prudence and kindness he could repose confidence.

Crèvecœur himself only stopped to recommend the utmost caution to the governor of a small Burgundian garrison who occupied the place, and required him also to mount a guard of honour upon the convent during the residence of the Countess Isabelle of Croye — ostensibly to secure her safety, but perhaps secretly to prevent her attempting to escape. The count only assigned as a cause for the garrison being vigilant some vague rumours which he had heard of disturbances in the bishopric of Liege. But he was determined himself to be the first who should carry the formidable news of the insurrection and the murder of the bishop, in all their horrible reality, to Duke Charles; and for that purpose, having procured fresh horses for himself and suite, he mounted with the resolution of continuing his journey to Péronne without stopping for repose; and informing Quentin Durward that he must attend him, he made, at the same time, a mock apology for parting fair company but hoped that to so devoted a squire of dames a night's journey by moonshine would be more agreeable

than supinely to yield himself to slumber like an ordinary mortal.

Quentin, already sufficiently afflicted by finding that he was to be parted from Isabelle, longed to answer this taunt with an indignant defiance; but aware that the count would only laugh at his anger and despise his challenge, he resolved to wait some future time, when he might have an opportunity of obtaining some amends from this proud lord, who, though for very different reasons, had become nearly as odious to him as the Wild Boar of Ardennes himself. He therefore assented to Crèvecœur's proposal, as to what he had no choice of declining, and they pursued in company, and with all the despatch they could exert, the road between Charleroi and Péronne.

CHAPTER XXV

THE UNBIDDEN GUEST

No human quality is so well wove
In warp and woof but there's some flaw in it.
I've known a brave man fly a shepherd's cur,
A wise man so demean him, drivelling idiocy
Had wellnigh been ashamed on't. For your crafty,
Your worldly wise man, he, above the rest,
Weaves his own snares so fine, he's often caught in them.

Old Play.

QUENTIN, during the earlier part of the night-journey, had to combat with that bitter heartache which is felt when youth parts and probably for ever, with her he loves. As, pressed by the urgency of the moment and the impatience of Crèvecœur, they hasted on through the rich lowlands of Hainault, under the benign guidance of a rich and lustrous harvest-moon, she shed her yellow influence over rich and deep pastures, woodland, and corn-fields, from which the husbandmen were using her light to withdraw the grain, such was the industry of the Flemings even at that period; she shone on broad, level, and fructifying rivers, where glided the white sail in the service of commerce, uninterrupted by rock or torrent, beside lively quiet villages, whose external decency and cleanliness expressed the ease and comfort of the inhabitants; she gleamed upon the feudal castle of many a gallant baron and knight, with its deep moat, battlemented court, and high belfry, for the chivalry of Hainault was renowned among the nobles of Europe; and her light displayed at a distance, in its

broad beam, the gigantic towers of more than one lofty minster.

Yet all this fair variety, however differing from the waste and wilderness of his own land, interrupted not the course of Quentin's regrets and sorrows. He had left his heart behind him, when he departed from Charleroi; and the only reflection which the farther journey inspired was, that every step was carrying him farther from Isabelle. His imagination was taxed to recall every word she had spoken, every look she had directed towards him; and, as happens frequently in such cases, the impression made upon his imagination by the recollection of these particulars was even stronger than the realities themselves had excited.

At length, after the cold hour of midnight was past, in spite alike of love and of sorrow, the extreme fatigue which Quentin had undergone the two preceding days began to have an effect on him, which his habits of exercise of every kind, and his singular alertness and activity of character, as well as the painful nature of the reflections which occupied his thoughts, had hitherto prevented his experiencing. The ideas of his mind began to be so little corrected by the exertions of his senses, worn out and deadened as the latter now were by extremity of fatigue, that the visions which the former drew superseded or perverted the information conveyed by the blunted organs of seeing and hearing; and Durward was only sensible that he was awake by the exertions which, sensible of the peril of his situation, he occasionally made to resist falling into a deep and dead sleep. Every now and then a strong consciousness of the risk of falling from or with his horse roused him to

exertion and animation; but ere long his eyes again were dimmed by confused shades of all sorts of mingled colours, the moonlight landscape swam before them, and he was so much overcome with fatigue that the Count of Crèvecœur, observing his condition, was at length compelled to order two of his attendants, one to each rein of Durward's bridle, in order to prevent the risk of his falling from his horse.

When at length they reached the town of Landrecy, the count, in compassion to the youth, who had now been in a great measure without sleep for three nights, allowed himself and his retinue a halt of four hours for rest and refreshment.

Deep and sound were Quentin's slumbers, until they were broken by the sound of the count's trumpet, and the cry of his *fourriers* and harbingers, '*Debout! Debout! Ha! Messires, en route — en route!*' Yet, unwelcomely early as the tones came, they awaked him a different being in strength and spirits from what he had fallen asleep. Confidence in himself and his fortunes returned with his reviving spirits and with the rising sun. He thought of his love no longer as a desperate and fantastic dream, but as a high and invigorating principle, to be cherished in his bosom, although he might never propose to himself, under all the difficulties by which he was beset, to bring it to any prosperous issue. 'The pilot,' he reflected, 'steers his bark by the polar star, although he never expects to become possessor of it; and the thoughts of Isabelle of Croye shall make me a worthy man-at-arms, though I may never see her more. When she hears that a Scottish soldier named Quentin Durward distinguished himself in a well-fought field, or left

his body on the breach of a disputed fortress, she will remember the companion of her journey, as one who did all in his power to avert the snares and misfortunes which beset it, and perhaps will honour his memory with a tear, his coffin with a garland.'

In this manly mood of bearing his misfortune, Quentin felt himself more able to receive and reply to the jests of the Count of Crèvecœur, who passed several on his alleged effeminacy and incapacity of undergoing fatigue. The young Scot accommodated himself so good-humouredly to the count's raillery, and replied at once so happily and so respectfully, that the change of his tone and manner made obviously a more favourable impression on the count than he had entertained from his prisoner's conduct during the preceding evening, when, rendered irritable by the feelings of his situation, he was alternately moodily silent or fiercely argumentative.

The veteran soldier began at length to take notice of his young companion as a pretty fellow of whom something might be made; and more than hinted to him that, would he but resign his situation in the Archer Guard of France, he would undertake to have him enrolled in the household of the Duke of Burgundy in an honourable condition, and would himself take care of his advancement. And although Quentin, with suitable expressions of gratitude, declined his favour at present, until he should find out how far he had to complain of his original patron, King Louis, he, nevertheless, continued to remain on good terms with the Count of Crèvecœur; and, while his enthusiastic mode of thinking, and his foreign and idiomatical manner of expressing himself, often excited a smile on the grave cheek of the count, that smile

had lost all that it had of sarcastic and bitter, and did not exceed the limits of good humour and good manners.

Thus travelling on with much more harmony than on the preceding day, the little party came at last within two miles of the famous and strong town of Péronne, near which the Duke of Burgundy's army lay encamped, ready, as was supposed, to invade France; and in opposition to which Louis XI had himself assembled a strong force near St. Maxence, for the purpose of bringing to reason his over-powerful vassal.

Péronne, situated upon a deep river, in a flat country, and surrounded by strong bulwarks and profound moats, was accounted in ancient, as in modern times, one of the strongest fortresses in France.[1] The Count of Crèvecœur, his retinue, and his prisoner were approaching the fortress about the third hour after noon; when, riding through the pleasant glades of a large forest, which then covered the approach to the town on the east side, they were met by two men of rank, as appeared from the number of their attendants, dressed in the habits worn in time of peace; and who, to judge from the falcons which they carried on their wrists, and the number of spaniels and greyhounds led by their followers, were engaged in the amusement of hawking. But on perceiving Crèvecœur, with whose appearance and liveries they were sufficiently intimate, they quitted the search which they were making for a heron along the banks of a long canal, and came galloping towards him.

'News — news, Count of Crèvecœur!' they cried both together; 'will you give news or take news, or will you barter fairly?'

[1] See Note 6.

The Castle of Peronne

'I would barter fairly, Messires,' said Crèvecœur, after saluting them courteously, 'did I conceive you had any news of importance sufficient to make an equivalent for mine.'

The two sportsmen smiled on each other; and the elder of the two, a fine baronial figure, with a dark countenance, marked with that sort of sadness which some physiognomists ascribe to a melancholy temperament, and some, as the Italian statuary augured of the visage of Charles I, consider as predicting an unhappy death,[1] turning to his companion, said, 'Crèvecœur has been in Brabant, the country of commerce, and he has learned all its artifices: he will be too hard for us if we drive a bargain.'

'Messires,' said Crèvecœur, 'the Duke ought in justice to have the first of my wares, as the seigneur takes his toll before open market begins. But tell me, are your news of a sad or a pleasant complexion?'

The person whom he particularly addressed was a lively-looking man, with an eye of great vivacity, which was corrected by an expression of reflection and gravity about the mouth and upper lip — the whole physiognomy marking a man who saw and judged rapidly, but was sage and slow in forming resolutions or in expressing opinions. This was the famous Knight of Hainault, son of Collart, or Nicolas de la Clite, known in history and amongst historians by the venerable name of Philip des Comines, at this time close to the person of Duke Charles the Bold,[2] and one of the most esteemed counsellors. He answered Crèvecœur's question concerning the complexion of the news of which he and his com-

[1] See Note 7. [2] See Note 8.

panion, the Baron d'Hymbercourt, were the depositaries. 'They were,' he said, 'like the colours of the rainbow, various in hue, as they might be viewed from different points, and placed against the black cloud or the fair sky. Such a rainbow was never seen in France or Flanders since that of Noah's ark.'

'My tidings,' replied Crèvecœur, 'are altogether like the comet — gloomy, wild, and terrible in themselves, yet to be accounted the forerunners of still greater and more dreadful evils which are to ensue.'

'We must open our bales,' said Comines to his companion, 'or our market will be forestalled by some newcomers, for ours are public news. In one word, Crèvecœur, listen, and wonder — King Louis is at Péronne!'

'What!' said the count, in astonishment; 'has the Duke retreated without a battle? and do you remain here in your dress of peace after the town is besieged by the French for I cannot suppose it taken?'

'No, surely,' said D'Hymbercourt, 'the banners of Burgundy have not gone back a foot; and still King Louis is here.'

'Then Edward of England must have come over the seas with his bowmen,' said Crèvecœur, 'and, like his ancestors, gained a second field of Poictiers.'

'Not so,' said Comines. 'Not a French banner has been borne down, not a sail spread from England, where Edward is too much amused among the wives of the citizens of London to think of playing the Black Prince. Hear the extraordinary truth. You know, when you left us, that the conference between the commissioners on the parts of France and Burgundy was broken up, without apparent chance of reconciliation?'

'True; and we dreamt of nothing but war.'

'What has followed has been indeed so like a dream,' said Comines, 'that I almost expect to awake and find it so. Only one day since, the Duke had in council protested so furiously against further delay, that it was resolved to send a defiance to the King and march forward instantly into France. Toison d'Or, commissioned for the purpose, had put on his official dress, and had his foot in the stirrup to mount his horse, when lo! the French herald Montjoie rode into our camp. We thought of nothing else than that Louis had been beforehand with our defiance; and began to consider how much the Duke would resent the advice which had prevented him from being the first to declare war. But a council being speedily assembled, what was our wonder when the herald informed us that Louis, King of France, was scarce an hour's riding behind, intending to visit Charles Duke of Burgundy with a small retinue, in order that their differences might be settled at a personal interview!'

'You surprise me, Messires,' said Crèvecœur; 'and yet you surprise me less than you might have expected; for, when I was last at Plessis-lès-Tours, the all-trusted Cardinal Balue, offended with his master, and Burgundian at heart, did hint to me, that he could so work upon Louis's peculiar foibles as to lead him to place himself in such a position with regard to Burgundy that the Duke might have the terms of peace of his own making. But I never suspected that so old a fox as Louis could have been induced to come into the trap of his own accord. What said the Burgundian counsellors?'

'As you may guess,' answered D'Hymbercourt;

'talked much of faith to be observed and little of advantage to be obtained by such a visit; while it was manifest they thought almost entirely of the last, and were only anxious to find some way to reconcile it with the necessary preservation of appearances.'

'And what said the Duke?' continued the Count of Crèvecœur.

'Spoke brief and bold, as usual,' replied Comines. '"Which of you was it," he asked, "who witnessed the meeting of my cousin Louis and me after the battle of Montl'héry,[1] when I was so thoughtless as to accompany him back within the intrenchments of Paris with half a score of attendants, and so put my person at the King's mercy?" I replied, that most of us had been present, and none could ever forget the alarm which it had been his pleasure to give us. "Well," said the Duke, "you blamed me for my folly, and I confessed to you that I had acted like a giddy-pated boy; and I am aware, too, that, my father of happy memory being then alive, my kinsman, Louis, would have had less advantage by seizing on my person than I might now have by securing his. But, nevertheless, if my royal kinsman comes hither on the present occasion in the same singleness of heart under which I then acted, he shall be royally welcome. If it is meant by this appearance of confidence to circumvent and to blind me till he execute some of his politic schemes, by St. George of Burgundy, let him look to it!" And, so having turned up his mustaches and stamped on the ground, he ordered us all to get on our horses and receive so extraordinary a guest.'

'And you met the King accordingly?' replied the

[1] See Note 9.

Count of Crèvecœur. 'Miracles have not ceased! How was he accompanied?'

'As slightly as might be,' answered D'Hymbercourt: 'only a score of two of the Scottish Guard, and a few knights and gentlemen of his household, among whom his astrologer, Galeotti, made the gayest figure.'

'That fellow,' said Crèvecœur, 'holds some dependence on the Cardinal Balue; I should not be surprised that he has had his share in determining the King to this step of doubtful policy. Any nobility of higher rank?'

'There are Monsieur of Orleans and Dunois,' replied Comines.

'I will have a rouse with Dunois,' said Crèvecœur, 'wag the world as it will. But we heard that both he and the duke had fallen into disgrace, and were in prison.'

'They were both under arrest in the Castle of Loches, that delightful place of retirement for the French nobility,' said D'Hymbercourt; 'but Louis has released them, in order to bring them with him, perhaps because he cared not to leave Orleans behind. For his other attendants, faith, I think his gossip, the hangman marshal, with two or three of his retinue, and Oliver, his barber, may be the most considerable; and the whole bevy so poorly arrayed that, by my honour, the King resembles most an old usurer going to collect desperate debts, attended by a body of catchpolls.'

'And where is he lodged?' said Crèvecœur.

'Nay, that,' replied Comines, 'is the most marvellous of all. Our duke offered to let the King's Archer Guard have a gate of the town, and a bridge of boats over the Somme, and to have assigned to Louis himself the ad-

joining house, belonging to a wealthy burgess, Giles Orthen; but, in going thither, the King espied the banners of De Lau and Pencil de Rivière, whom he had banished from France, and scared, as it would seem, with the thought of lodging so near refugees and malcontents of his own making, he craved to be quartered in the Castle of Péronne, and *there* he hath his abode accordingly.'

'Why, God ha' mercy!' exclaimed Crèvecœur, 'this is not only venturing into the lion's den, but thrusting his head into his very jaws. Nothing less than the very bottom of the rat-trap would serve the crafty old politician!'

'Nay,' said Comines, 'D'Hymbercourt hath not told you the speech of Le Glorieux,[1] which, in my mind, was the shrewdest opinion that was given.'

'And what said *his* most illustrious wisdom?' asked the count.

'As the Duke,' replied Comines, 'was hastily ordering some vessels and ornaments of plate and the like, to be prepared as presents for the King and his retinue, by way of welcome on his arrival, "Trouble not thy small brain about it, my friend Charles," said Le Glorieux. "I will give thy cousin Louis a nobler and a fitter gift than thou canst, and that is my cap and bells, and my bauble to boot; for, by the mass, he is a greater fool than I am for putting himself in thy power." "But if I give him no reason to repent it, sirrah, how then?" said the Duke. "Then, truly, Charles, thou shalt have cap and bauble thyself, as the greatest fool of the three of us." I promise you this knavish quip touched the Duke closely. I saw him change colour and bite his lip. And

[1] The jester of Charles of Burgundy, of whom more hereafter.

now our news are told, noble Crèvecœur, and what think you they resemble?'

'A mine full-charged with gunpowder,' answered Crèvecœur, 'to which, I fear, it is my fate to bring the kindled linstock. Your news and mine are like flax and fire, which cannot meet without bursting into flame, or like certain chemical substances which cannot be mingled without an explosion. Friends — gentlemen, ride close by my rein; and when I tell you what has chanced in the bishopric of Liege, I think you will be of opinion that King Louis might as safely have undertaken a pilgrimage to the infernal regions as this ill-timed visit to Péronne.'

The two nobles drew up close on either hand of the count, and listened, with half-suppressed exclamations and gestures of the deepest wonder and interest, to his account of the transactions at Liege and Schonwaldt. Quentin was then called forward, and examined and re-examined on the particulars of the bishop's death, until at length he refused to answer any further interrogatories not knowing wherefore they were asked, or what use might be made of his replies.

They now reached the rich and level banks of the Somme, and the ancient walls of the little town of Péronne la Pucelle, and the deep green meadows adjoining, now whitened with the numerous tents of the Duke of Burgundy's army, amounting to about fifteen thousand men.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE INTERVIEW

When princes meet, astrologers may mark it
An ominous conjunction, full of boding,
Like that of Mars with Saturn.

Old Play.

ONE hardly knows whether to term it a privilege or a penalty annexed to the quality of princes, that, in their intercourse with each other, they are required, by the respect which is due to their own rank and dignity, to regulate their feelings and expressions by a severe etiquette, which precludes all violent and avowed display of passion, and which, but that the whole world are aware that this assumed complaisance is a matter of ceremony, might justly pass for profound dissimulation. It is no less certain, however, that the overstepping of these bounds of ceremonial, for the purpose of giving more direct vent to their angry passions, has the effect of compromising their dignity with the world in general, as was particularly noted when those distinguished rivals, Francis the First and the Emperor Charles, gave each other the lie direct, and were desirous of deciding their differences hand to hand, in single combat.

Charles of Burgundy, the most hasty and impatient, nay, the most imprudent, prince of his time, found himself, nevertheless, fettered within the magic circle which prescribed the most profound deference to Louis, as his suzerain and liege lord, who had deigned to confer upon

him, a vassal of the crown, the distinguished honour of a personal visit. Dressed in his ducal mantle, and attended by his great officers and principal knights and nobles, he went in gallant cavalcade to receive Louis XI. His retinue absolutely blazed with gold and silver; for the wealth of the court of England being exhausted by the wars of York and Lancaster, and the expenditure of France limited by the economy of the sovereign, that of Burgundy was for the time the most magnificent in Europe. The *cortège* of Louis, on the contrary, was few in number, and comparatively mean in appearance, and the exterior of the King himself, in a threadbare cloak, with his wonted old high-crowned hat stuck full of images, rendered the contrast yet more striking; and as the Duke, richly attired with the coronet and mantle of state, threw himself from his noble charger, and, kneeling on one knee, offered to hold the stirrup while Louis dismounted from his little ambling palfrey, the effect was almost grotesque.

The greeting between the two potentates was, of course, as full of affected kindness and compliment as it was totally devoid of sincerity. But the temper of the Duke rendered it much more difficult for him to preserve the necessary appearances in voice, speech, and demeanour; while in the King every species of simulation and dissimulation seemed so much a part of his nature that those best acquainted with him could not have distinguished what was feigned from what was real.

Perhaps the most accurate illustration, were it not unworthy two such high potentates, would be to suppose the King in the situation of a stranger, perfectly acquainted with the habits and dispositions of the ca-

nine race, who, for some purpose of his own, is desirous to make friends with a large and surly mastiff, that holds him in suspicion, and is disposed to worry him on the first symptoms either of diffidence or of umbrage. The mastiff growls internally, erects his bristles, shows his teeth, yet is ashamed to fly upon the intruder, who seems at the same time so kind and so confiding, and therefore the animal endures advances which are far from pacifying him, watching at the same time the slightest opportunity which may justify him in his own eyes for seizing his friend by the throat.

The King was no doubt sensible, from the altered voice, constrained manner, and abrupt gestures of the Duke, that the game he had to play was delicate, and perhaps he more than once repented having ever taken it in hand. But repentance was too late, and all that remained for him was that inimitable dexterity of management which the King understood equally at least with any man that ever lived.

The demeanour which Louis used towards the Duke was such as to resemble the kind overflowing of the heart in a moment of sincere reconciliation with an honoured and tried friend, from whom he had been estranged by temporary circumstances now passed away, and forgotten as soon as removed. The King blamed himself for not having sooner taken the decisive step of convincing his kind and good kinsman, by such a mark of confidence as he was now bestowing, that the angry passages which had occurred betwixt them were nothing in his remembrance when weighed against the kindness which received him when an exile from France, and under the displeasure of the King his father. He spoke

Charles of Burgundy

By courtesy of Franz Hanfstaengl

of the Good Duke of Burgundy, as Philip the father of Duke Charles was currently called, and remembered a thousand instances of his paternal kindness.

'I think, cousin,' he said, 'your father made little difference in his affection betwixt you and me; for I remember, when by an accident I had bewildered myself in a hunting-party, I found the Good Duke upbraiding you with leaving me in the forest, as if you had been careless of the safety of an elder brother.'

The Duke of Burgundy's features were naturally harsh and severe, and when he attempted to smile, in polite acquiescence to the truth of what the King told him, the grimace which he made was truly diabolical.

'Prince of dissemblers,' he said in his secret soul, 'would that it stood with my honour to remind you *how* you have requited all the benefits of our house!'

'And then,' continued the King, 'if the ties of consanguinity and gratitude are not sufficient to bind us together, my fair cousin, we have those of spiritual relationship; for I am god-father to your fair daughter Mary, who is as dear to me as one of my own maidens; and when the saints — their holy name be blessed! — sent me a little blossom which withered in the course of three months, it was your princely father who held it at the font, and celebrated the ceremony of baptism with richer and prouder magnificence than Paris itself could have afforded. Never shall I forget the deep, the indelible impression which the generosity of Duke Philip, and yours, my dearest cousin, made upon the half-broken heart of the poor exile!'

'Your Majesty,' said the Duke, compelling himself to make some reply, 'acknowledged that slight obliga-

tion in terms which overpaid all the display which Burgundy could make to show due sense of the honour you had done its sovereign.'

'I remember the words you mean, fair cousin,' said the King, smiling; 'I think they were, that in guerdon of the benefit of that day, I, poor wanderer, had nothing to offer save the persons of myself, of my wife, and of my child. Well, and I think I have indifferently well redeemed my pledge.'

'I mean not to dispute what your Majesty is pleased to aver,' said the Duke; 'but —'

'But you ask,' said the King, interrupting him, 'how my actions have accorded with my words. Marry thus: the body of my infant child Joachim rests in Burgundian earth; my own person I have this morning placed unreservedly in your power; and for that of my wife — truly, cousin, I think, considering the period of time which has passed, you will scarce insist on my keeping my word in that particular. She was born on the day of the Blessed Annunciation (he crossed himself and muttered an *Ora pro nobis*), some fifty years since; but she is no farther distant than Rheims, and if you insist on my promise being fulfilled to the letter, she shall presently wait your pleasure.'

Angry as the Duke of Burgundy was at the barefaced attempt of the King to assume towards him a tone of friendship and intimacy, he could not help laughing at the whimsical reply of that singular monarch, and his laugh was as discordant as the abrupt tones of passion in which he often spoke. Having laughed longer and louder than was at that period, or would now be, thought fitting the time and occasion, he answered in the same

tone, bluntly declining the honour of the Queen's company, but stating his willingness to accept that of the King's eldest daughter, whose beauty was celebrated.

'I am happy, fair cousin,' said the King, with one of those dubious smiles of which he frequently made use, 'that your gracious pleasure has not fixed on my younger daughter Joan. I should otherwise have had spear-breaking between you and my cousin of Orleans; and, had harm come of it, I must on either side have lost a kind friend and affectionate cousin.'

'Nay — nay, my royal sovereign,' said Duke Charles, 'the Duke of Orleans shall have no interruption from me in the path which he has chosen *par amours*. The cause in which I couch my lance against Orleans must be fair and straight.'

Louis was far from taking amiss this brutal allusion to the personal deformity of the Princess Joan. On the contrary, he was rather pleased to find that the Duke was content to be amused with broad jests, in which he was himself a proficient, and which, according to the modern phrase, spared much sentimental hypocrisy. Accordingly, he speedily placed their intercourse on such a footing that Charles, though he felt it impossible to play the part of an affectionate and reconciled friend to a monarch whose ill offices he had so often encountered, and whose sincerity on the present occasion he so strongly doubted, yet had no difficulty in acting the hearty landlord towards a facetious guest; and so the want of reciprocity in kinder feelings between them was supplied by the tone of good fellowship which exists between two boon companions — a tone natural to the Duke from the frankness, and, it might be added,

the grossness, of his character, and to Louis, because, though capable of assuming any mood of social intercourse, that which really suited him best was mingled with grossness of ideas and caustic humour in expression.

Both princes were happily able to preserve during the period of a banquet at the town-house of Péronne, the same kind of conversation, on which they met as on a neutral ground, and which, as Louis easily perceived, was more available than any other to keep the Duke of Burgundy in that state of composure which seemed necessary to his own safety.

Yet he was alarmed to observe that the Duke had around him several of those French nobles, and those of the highest rank and in situations of great trust and power, whom his own severity or injustice had driven into exile; and it was to secure himself from the possible effects of their resentment and revenge that (as already mentioned) he requested to be lodged in the castle or citadel of Péronne rather than in the town itself.[1] This was readily granted by Duke Charles, with one of those grim smiles of which it was impossible to say whether it meant good or harm to the party whom it concerned.

But when the King, expressing himself with as much delicacy as he could, and in the manner he thought best qualified to lull suspicion asleep, asked whether the Scottish Archers of his Guard might not maintain the custody of the Castle of Péronne during his residence there, in lieu of the gate of the town which the Duke had offered to their care, Charles replied, with his

[1] See Note 10.

wonted sternness of voice and abruptness of manner, rendered more alarming by his habit, when he spoke, of either turning up his mustaches or handling his sword or dagger, the last of which he used frequently to draw a little way and then return to the sheath [1] — 'St. Martin! No, my liege. You are in your vassal's camp and city — so men call me in respect to your Majesty — my castle and town are yours and my men are yours; so it is indifferent whether my men-at-arms or the Scottish Archers guard either the outer gate or defences of the castle. No, by St. George! Péronne is a virgin fortress; she shall not lose her reputation by any neglect of mine. Maidens must be carefully watched, my royal cousin, if we would have them continue to live in good fame.'

'Surely, fair cousin, and I altogether agree with you,' said the King, 'I being in fact more interested in the reputation of the good little town than you are — Péronne being, as you know, fair cousin, one of those upon the same river Somme which, pledged to your father of happy memory for redemption of money, are liable to be redeemed upon payment. And, to speak truth, coming, like an honest debtor, disposed to clear off my obligations of every kind, I have brought here a few sumpter mules loaded with silver for the redemption — enough to maintain even your princely and royal establishment, fair cousin, for the space of three years.'

'I will not receive a penny of it,' said the Duke, twirling his mustaches; 'the day of redemption is past, my royal cousin; nor was there ever serious purpose that the right should be exercised, the cession of these towns

[1] This gesture, very indicative of a fierce character, is also by stage tradition a distinction of Shakespeare's Richard III.

being the sole recompense my father ever received from France when, in a happy hour for your family, he consented to forget the murder of my grandfather, and to exchange the alliance of England for that of your father. St. George! if he had not so acted, your royal self, far from having towns on the Somme, could scarce have kept those beyond the Loire. No; I will not render a stone of them, were I to receive for every stone so rendered its weight in gold. I thank God, and the wisdom and valour of my ancestors, that the revenues of Burgundy, though it be but a duchy, will maintain my state, even when the king is my guest, without obliging me to barter my heritage.'

'Well, fair cousin,' answered the King, with the same mild and placid manner as before, and unperturbed by the loud tone and violent gestures of the Duke, 'I see that you are so good a friend to France that you are unwilling to part with aught that belongs to her. But we shall need some moderator in these affairs when we come to treat of them in council. What say you to St. Paul?'

'Neither St. Paul, nor St. Peter, nor e'er a saint in the calendar,' said the Duke of Burgundy, 'shall preach me out of the possession of Péronne.'

'Nay, but you mistake me,' said King Louis, smiling; 'I mean Louis de Luxembourg, our trusty constable, the Count of St. Paul. Ah! St. Mary of Embrun! we lack but his head at our conference! the best head in France, and the most useful to the restoration of perfect harmony betwixt us.'

'By St. George of Burgundy!' said the Duke, 'I marvel to hear your Majesty talk thus of a man false and perjured both to France and Burgundy — one who

hath ever endeavoured to fan into a flame our frequent differences, and that with the purpose of giving himself the airs of a mediator. I swear by the order I wear, that his marshes shall not be long a resource for him!'

'Be not so warm, cousin,' replied the King, smiling, and speaking under his breath; 'when I wished for the constable's *head*, as a means of ending the settlement of our trifling differences, I had no desire for his *body*, which might remain at St. Quentin's with much convenience.'

'Ho! ho! I take your meaning, my royal cousin,' said Charles, with the same dissonant laugh which some other of the King's coarse pleasantries had extorted, and added, stamping with his heel on the ground, 'I allow, in that sense, the head of the constable *might* be useful at Péronne.'

These and other discourses, by which the King mixed hints at serious affairs amid matters of mirth and amusement, did not follow each other consecutively; but were adroitly introduced during the time of the banquet at the *hôtel de ville*, during a subsequent interview in the Duke's own apartments, and, in short, as occasion seemed to render the introduction of such delicate subjects easy and natural.

Indeed, however rashly Louis had placed himself in a risk which the Duke's fiery temper, and the mutual subjects of exasperated enmity which subsisted betwixt them, rendered of doubtful and perilous issues, never pilot on an unknown coast conducted himself with more firmness and prudence. He seemed to sound, with the utmost address and precision, the depths and shallows of his rival's mind and temper, and manifested neither

doubt nor fear when the result of his experiments discovered much more of sunken rocks and of dangerous shoals than of safe anchorage.

At length a day closed which must have been a wearisome one to Louis, from the constant exertion, vigilance, precaution, and attention which his situation required, as it was a day of constraint to the Duke, from the necessity of suppressing the violent feelings to which he was in the general habit of giving uncontrolled vent.

No sooner had the latter retired into his own apartment, after he had taken a formal leave of the King for the night, than he gave way to the explosion of passion which he had so long suppressed; and many an oath and abusive epithet, as his jester, Le Glorieux, said, 'fell that night upon heads which they were never coined for, his domestics reaping the benefit of that hoard of injurious language which he could not in decency bestow on his royal guest, even in his absence, and which was yet become too great to be altogether suppressed. The jests of the clown had some effect in tranquillising the Duke's angry mood; he laughed loudly, threw the jester a piece of gold, caused himself to be disrobed in tranquillity, swallowed a deep cup of wine and spices, went to bed, and slept soundly.

The *couchée* of King Louis is more worthy of notice than that of Charles; for the violent expression of exasperated and headlong passion, as indeed it belongs more to the brutal than the intelligent part of our nature, has little to interest us in comparison to the deep workings of a vigorous and powerful mind.

Louis was escorted to the lodgings he had chosen in the castle, or citadel, of Péronne by the chamberlains

and harbingers of the Duke of Burgundy, and received at the entrance by a strong guard of archers and men-at-arms.

As he descended from his horse to cross the drawbridge, over a moat of unusual width and depth, he looked on the sentinels, and observed to Comines, who accompanied him, with other Burgundian nobles, 'They wear St. Andrew's crosses, but not those of my Scottish Archers.'

'You will find them as ready to die in your defense, sire,' said the Burgundian, whose sagacious ear had detected in the King's tone of speech a feeling which doubtless Louis would have concealed if he could. 'They wear the St. Andrew's cross as the appendage of the collar of the Golden Fleece, my master the Duke of Burgundy's order.'

'Do I not know it?' said Louis, showing the collar which he himself wore in compliment to his host. 'It is one of the dear bonds of fraternity which exists between my kind brother and myself. We are brothers in chivalry, as in spiritual relationship — cousins by birth, and friends by every tie of kind feeling and good neighbourhood. No farther than the base-court, my noble lords and gentlemen! I can permit your attendance no farther; you have done me enough of grace.'

'We were charged by the Duke,' said D'Hymbercourt, 'to bring your Majesty to your lodging. We trust your Majesty will permit us to obey our master's command.'

'In this small matter,' said the King, 'I trust you will allow my command to outweigh his, even with you his liege subjects. I am something indisposed, my lords —

something fatigued. Great pleasure hath its toils as well as great pain. I trust to enjoy your society better to-morrow. And yours too, Seignior Philip of Comines. I am told you are the annalist of the time; we that desire to have a name in history must speak you fair, for men say your pen hath a sharp point, when you will. Good-night, my lords and gentles, to all and each of you.'

The lords of Burgundy retired, much pleased with the grace of Louis's manner and the artful distribution of his attentions; and the King was left with only one or two of his own personal followers, under the archway of the base-court of the Castle of Péronne, looking on the huge tower which occupied one of the angles, being in fact the donjon, or principal keep, of the place. This tall, dark, massive building was seen clearly by the same moon which was lighting Quentin Durward betwixt Charleroi and Péronne, which, as the reader is aware, shone with peculiar lustre. The great keep was in form nearly resembling the White Tower in the citadel of London, but still more ancient in its architecture, deriving its date, as was affirmed, from the days of Charlemagne. The walls were of a tremendous thickness, the windows very small, and grated with bars of iron, and the huge clumsy bulk of the building cast a dark and portentous shadow over the whole of the courtyard.

'I am not to be lodged *there!*' the King said, with a shudder that had something in it ominous.

'No,' replied the grey-headed seneschal, who attended upon him unbonneted. 'God forbid! Your Majesty's apartments are prepared in these lower buildings which

are hard by, and in which King John slept two nights before the battle of Poictiers.'

'Hum — that is no lucky omen neither,' muttered the king; 'but what of the tower, my old friend? and why should you desire of Heaven that I may not be there lodged?'

'Nay, my gracious liege,' said the seneschal, 'I know no evil of the tower at all — only that the sentinels say lights are seen, and strange noises heard, in it at night; and there are reasons why that may be the case, for anciently it was used as a state prison, and there are many tales of deeds which have been done in it.'

Louis asked no further questions; for no man was more bound than he to respect the secrets of a prison-house. At the door of the apartments destined for his use, which, though of later date than the tower, were still both ancient and gloomy, stood a small party of the Scottish Guard, which the Duke, although he declined to concede the point to Louis, had ordered to be introduced, so as to be near the person of their master. The faithful Lord Crawford was at their head.

'Crawford — my honest and faithful Crawford,' said the King, 'where hast thou been to-day? Are the lords of Burgundy so inhospitable as to neglect one of the bravest and most noble gentlemen that ever trode a court? I saw you not at the banquet.'

'I declined it, my liege,' said Crawford. 'Times are changed with me. The day has been that I could have ventured a carouse with the best man in Burgundy, and that in the juice of his own grape; but a matter of four pints now flusters me, and I think it concerns your

Majesty's service to set in this an example to my callants.'

'Thou art ever prudent,' said the King; 'but surely your toil is the less when you have so few men to command? and a time of festivity requires not so severe self-denial on your part as a time of danger.'

'If I have few men to command,' said Crawford, 'I have the more need to keep the knaves in fitting condition; and whether this business be like to end in feasting or fighting, God and your Majesty know better than old John of Crawford.'

'You surely do not apprehend any danger?' said the King hastily, yet in a whisper.

'Not I,' answered Crawford. 'I wish I did; for, as old Earl Tineman[1] used to say, apprehended dangers may be always defended dangers. The word for the night, if your Majesty pleases?'

'Let it be "Burgundy," in honour of our host and of a liquor that you love, Crawford.'

'I will quarrel with neither duke nor drink so called,' said Crawford, 'provided always that both be sound. A good night to your Majesty!'

'A good night, my trusty Scot,' said the King, and passed on to his apartments.

At the door of his bedroom Le Balafré was placed sentinel. 'Follow me hither,' said the King as he passed him; and the archer accordingly, like a piece of machinery put in motion by an artist, strode after him into the apartment, and remained there fixed, silent, and motionless, attending the royal command.

'Have you heard from that wandering paladin, your

[1] An Earl of Douglas, so called.

nephew?' said the King; 'for he hath been lost to us since, like a young knight who had set out upon his first adventures, he sent us home two prisoners, as the first-fruits of his chivalry.'

'My lord, I heard something of that,' said Balafré; 'and I hope your Majesty will believe that, if he hath acted wrongfully, it was in no shape by my precept or example, since I never was so bold as to unhorse any of your Majesty's most illustrious house, better knowing my own condition, and —'

'Be silent on that point,' said the King; 'your nephew did his duty in the matter.'

'There indeed,' continued Balafré, 'he had the cue from me. "Quentin," said I to him, "whatever comes of it, remember you belong to the Scottish Archer Guard, and do your duty whatever comes on 't."'

'I guessed he had some such exquisite instructor,' said Louis; 'but it concerns me that you answer my first question. Have you heard of your nephew of late? Stand aback, my masters,' he added, addressing the gentlemen of his chamber, 'for this concerneth no ears but mine.'

'Surely, please your Majesty,' said Balafré, 'I have seen this very evening the groom Charlet, whom my kinsman despatched from Liege, or some castle of the bishop's which is near it, and where he hath lodged the Ladies of Croye in safety.'

'Now, Our Lady of Heaven be praised for it!' said the King. 'Art thou sure of it? — sure of the good news?'

'As sure as I can be of aught,' said Le Balafré. 'The fellow, I think, hath letters for your Majesty from the Ladies of Croye.'

'Haste to get them,' said the King. 'Give thy harquebuss to one of these knaves — to Oliver — to any one. Now Our Lady of Embrun be praised! and silver shall be the screen that surrounds her high altar!'

Louis, in this fit of gratitude and devotion, doffed, as usual, his hat, selected from the figures with which it was garnished that which represented his favourite image of the Virgin, placed it on a table, and, kneeling down, repeated reverently the vow he had made.

The groom, being the first messenger whom Durward had despatched from Schonwaldt, was now introduced with his letters. They were addressed to the King by the Ladies of Croye, and barely thanked him in very cold terms for his courtesy while at his court, and, something more warmly, for having permitted them to retire, and sent them in safety from his dominions, expressions at which Louis laughed very heartily, instead of resenting them. He then demanded of Charlet, with obvious interest, whether they had not sustained some alarm or attack upon the road? Charlet, a stupid fellow, and selected for that quality, gave a very confused account of the affray in which his companion, the Gascon, had been killed, but knew of no other. Again Louis demanded of him, minutely and particularly, the route which the party had taken to Liege; and seemed much interested when he was informed, in reply, that they had, upon approaching Namur, kept the more direct road to Liege, upon the right bank of the Maes, instead of the left bank, as recommended in their route. The King then ordered the man a small present and dismissed him, disguising the anxiety he had expressed,

as if it only concerned the safety of the Ladies of Croye.

Yet the news, though they inferred the failure of one of his own favourite plans, seemed to imply more internal satisfaction on the King's part than he would have probably indicated in a case of brilliant success. He sighed like one whose breast has been relieved from a heavy burden, muttered his devotional acknowledgments with an air of deep sanctity, raised up his eyes, and hastened to adjust newer and surer schemes of ambition.

With such purpose, Louis ordered the attendance of his astrologer, Martius Galeotti, who appeared with his usual air of assumed dignity, yet not without a shade of uncertainty in his brow, as if he had doubted the King's kind reception. It was, however, favourable, even beyond the warmest which he had ever met with at any former interview. Louis termed him his friend, his father in the sciences, the glass by which a king should look into distant futurity, and concluded by thrusting on his finger a ring of very considerable value. Galeotti, not aware of the circumstances which had thus suddenly raised his character in the estimation of Louis, yet understood his own profession too well to let that ignorance be seen. He received with grave modesty the praises of Louis, which he contended were only due to the nobleness of the science which he practised, a science the rather the more deserving of admiration on account of its working miracles through means of so feeble an agent as himself; and he and the King took leave, for once much satisfied with each other.

On the astrologer's departure, Louis threw himself into a chair, and appearing much exhausted, dismissed

the rest of his attendants, excepting Oliver alone, who, creeping around with gentle assiduity and noiseless step, assisted him in the task of preparing for repose.

While he received this assistance, the King, unlike to his wont, was so silent and passive, that his attendant was struck by the unusual change in his deportment. The worst minds have often something of good principle in them: banditti show fidelity to their captain, and sometimes a protected and promoted favourite has felt a gleam of sincere interest in the monarch to whom he owed his greatness. Oliver le Diable, le Mauvais, or by whatever other name he was called expressive of his evil propensities, was, nevertheless, scarcely so completely identified with Satan as not to feel some touch of grateful feeling for his master in this singular condition, when, as it seemed, his fate was deeply interested, and his strength seemed to be exhausted. After for a short time rendering to the King in silence the usual services paid by a servant to his master at the toilet, the attendant was at length tempted to say, with the freedom which his sovereign's indulgence had permitted him in such circumstances, '*Tête-dieu*, sire, you seem as if you had lost a battle; and yet I, who was near your Majesty during this whole day, never knew you fight a field so gallantly.'

'A field!' said King Louis, looking up, and assuming his wonted causticity of tone and manner; '*Pasques-dieu*, my friend Oliver, say I have kept the arena in a bull-fight; for a blinder, and more stubborn, untameable, uncontrollable brute, than our cousin of Burgundy, never existed, save in the shape of a Murcian bull, trained for the bull-feasts. Well, let it pass. I dodged

him bravely. But, Oliver, rejoice with me that my plans in Flanders have not taken effect, whether as concerning those two rambling princesses of Croye, or in Liege — you understand me?'

'In faith, I do not, sire,' replied Oliver; 'it is impossible for me to congratulate your Majesty on the failure of your favourite schemes, unless you tell me some reason for the change in your own wishes and views.'

'Nay,' answered the King, 'there is no change in either, in a general view. But, *Pasques-dieu*, my friend, I have this day learned more of Duke Charles than I before knew. When he was Count de Charalois, in the time of the old Duke Philip and the banished Dauphin of France, we drank, and hunted, and rambled together, and many a wild adventure we have had. And in those days I had a decided advantage over him, like that which a strong spirit naturally assumes over a weak one. But he has since changed — has become a dogged, daring, assuming, disputatious dogmatist, who nourishes an obvious wish to drive matters to extremities, while he thinks he has the game in his own hands. I was compelled to glide as gently away from each offensive topic as if I touched a red-hot iron. I did but hint at the possibility of those erratic Countesses of Croye, ere they attained Liege — for thither I frankly confessed that, to the best of my belief, they were gone — falling into the hands of some wild snapper upon the frontiers, and, *Pasques-dieu!* you would have thought I had spoken of sacrilege. It is needless to tell you what he said, and quite enough to say, that I would have held my head's safety very insecure, if, in that moment, accounts had been brought of the success of thy friend, William with

the Beard, in his and thy honest scheme of bettering himself by marriage.'

'No friend of *mine*, if it please your Majesty,' said Oliver; 'neither friend nor plan of mine.'

'True, Oliver,' answered the king; 'thy plan had not been to wed, but to shave, such a bridegroom. Well, thou didst wish her as bad a one, when thou didst modestly hint at thyself. However, Oliver, lucky the man who has her not; for hang, draw, and quarter were the most gentle words which my gentle cousin spoke of him who should wed the young countess, his vassal, without his most ducal permission.'

'And he is, doubtless, as jealous of any disturbances in the good town of Liege?' asked the favourite.

'As much, or much more so,' replied the king, 'as your understanding may easily anticipate; but, even since I resolved on coming hither, my messengers have been in Liege, to repress, for the present, every movement to insurrection; and my very busy and bustling friends, Rouslaer and Pavillon, have orders to be quiet as a mouse until this happy meeting between my cousin and me is over.'

'Judging, then, from your Majesty's account,' said Oliver drily, 'the utmost to be hoped from this meeting is, that it should not make your condition worse? Surely this is like the crane that thrust her head into the fox's mouth, and was glad to thank her good fortune that it was not bitten off. Yet your Majesty seemed deeply obliged even now to the sage philosopher who encouraged you to play so hopeful a game.'

'No game,' said the King, sharply, 'is to be despaired of until it is lost, and that I have no reason to expect it

will be in my own case. On the contrary, if nothing occurs to stir the rage of this vindictive madman, I am sure of victory; and surely, I am not a little obliged to the skill which selected for my agent, as the conductor of the Ladies of Croye, a youth whose horoscope so far corresponded with mine, that he hath saved me from danger, even by the disobedience of my own commands, and taking the route which avoided De la Marck's ambuscade.'

'Your Majesty,' said Oliver, 'may find many agents who will serve you on the terms of acting rather after their own pleasure than your instructions.'

'Nay, nay, Oliver,' said Louis impatiently, 'the heathen poet speaks of *vota diis exaudita malignis* — wishes, that is, which the saints grant to us in their wrath; and such, in the circumstances, would have been the success of William de la Marck's exploit, had it taken place about this time, and while I am in the power of this Duke of Burgundy. And this my own art foresaw — fortified by that of Galeotti; that is, I foresaw not the miscarriage of De la Marck's undertaking, but I foresaw that the expedition of yonder Scottish archer should end happily for me. And such has been the issue, though in a manner different from what I expected; for the stars, though they foretell general results, are yet silent on the means by which such are accomplished, being often the very reverse of what we expect, or even desire. But why talk I of these mysteries to thee, Oliver, who art in so far worse than the very devil, who is thy namesake, since he believes and trembles; whereas thou art an infidel both to religion and to science, and wilt remain so till thine own destiny is accomplished, which, as thy horoscope

and physiognomy alike assure me, will be by the intervention of the gallows?'

'And if it indeed shall be so,' said Oliver, in a resigned tone of voice, 'it will be so ordered, because I was too grateful a servant to hesitate at executing the commands of my royal master.'

Louis burst into his usual sardonic laugh. 'Thou hast broke thy lance on me fairly, Oliver; and, by Our Lady, thou art right, for I defied thee to it. But, prithee, tell me in sadness, dost thou discover anything in these men's measures towards us, which may argue any suspicion of ill usage?'

'My liege,' replied Oliver, 'your Majesty and yonder learned philosopher look for augury to the stars and heavenly host; I am an earthly reptile, and consider but the things connected with my vocation. But, methinks, there is a lack of that earnest and precise attention on your Majesty, which men show to a welcome guest of a degree so far above them. The Duke, to-night, pleaded weariness, and saw your Majesty not farther than to the street, leaving to the officers of his household the task of conveying you to your lodgings. The rooms here are hastily and carelessly fitted up: the tapestry is hung up awry; and, in one of the pieces, as you may observe, the figures are reversed and stand on their heads, while the trees grow with their roots uppermost.'

'Pshaw! accident, and the effect of hurry,' said the King. 'When did you ever know me concerned about such trifles as these?'

'Not on their own account are they worth notice,' said Oliver; 'but as intimating the degree of esteem in which the officers of the Duke's household observe your Grace

to be held by him. Believe me, that had his desire seemed sincere that your reception should be in all points marked by scrupulous attention, the zeal of his people would have made minutes do the work of days. And when,' he added, pointing to the basin and ewer, 'was the furniture of your Majesty's toilet of other substance than silver?'

'Nay,' said the King, with a constrained smile, 'that last remark upon the shaving utensils, Oliver, is too much in the style of thine own peculiar occupation to be combated by any one. True it is, that when I was only a refugee and an exile, I was served upon gold plate by order of the same Charles, who accounted silver too mean for the Dauphin, though he seems to hold that metal too rich for the King of France. Well, Oliver, we will to bed. Our resolution has been made and executed; there is nothing to be done but to play manfully the game on which we have entered. I know that my cousin of Burgundy, like other wild bulls, shuts his eyes when he begins his career. I have but to watch that moment, like one of the tauridors whom we saw at Burgos, and his impetuosity places him at my mercy.'

CHAPTER XXVII

THE EXPLOSION

'T is listening fear, and dumb amazement all,
When to the startled eye the sudden glance
Appears far south, eruptive through the cloud.

THOMSON'S *Summer.*

THE preceding chapter, agreeable to its title, was designed as a retrospect, which might enable the reader fully to understand the terms upon which the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy stood together, when the former, moved, partly perhaps by his belief in astrology, which was represented as favourable to the issue of such a measure, and in a great measure doubtless by the conscious superiority of his own powers of mind over those of Charles, had adopted the extraordinary, and upon any other ground altogether inexplicable, resolution of committing his person to the faith of a fierce and exasperated enemy — a resolution also the more rash and unaccountable, as there were various examples in that stormy time to show, that safe-conducts, however solemnly plighted, had proved no assurance for those in whose favour they were conceived; and indeed the murder of the Duke's grandfather, at the bridge of Montereau, in presence of the father of Louis, and at an interview solemnly agreed upon for the establishment of peace and amnesty, was a horrible precedent, should the Duke be disposed to resort to it.

But the temper of Charles, though rough, fierce, head-

long and unyielding, was not, unless in the full tide of passion, faithless or ungenerous, faults which usually belong to colder dispositions. He was at no pains to show the King more courtesy than the laws of hospitality positively demanded; but, on the other hand, he evinced no purpose of overleaping their sacred barriers.

On the following morning after the King's arrival, there was a general muster of the troops of the Duke of Burgundy, which were so numerous and so excellently appointed, that, perhaps, he was not sorry to have an opportunity of displaying them before his great rival. Indeed, while he paid the necessary compliment of a vassal to his suzerain, in declaring that these troops were the King's, and not his own, the curl of his upper lip and the proud glance of his eye intimated his consciousness that the words he used were but empty compliment, and that his fine army, at his own unlimited disposal, was as ready to march against Paris as in any other direction. It must have added to Louis's mortification, that he recognised, as forming part of his host, many banners of French nobility, not only of Normandy and Bretagne, but of provinces more immediately subjected to his own authority, who, from various causes of discontent, had joined and made common cause with the Duke of Burgundy.

True to his character, however, Louis seemed to take little notice of these malcontents, while, in fact, he was revolving in his mind the various means by which it might be possible to detach them from the banners of Burgundy and bring them back to his own, and resolved for that purpose, that he would cause those to

whom he attached the greatest importance to be secretly sounded by Oliver and other agents.

He himself laboured diligently, but at the same time cautiously, to make interest with the Duke's chief officers and advisers, employing for that purpose the usual means of familiar and frequent notice, adroit flattery, and liberal presents; not, as he represented, to alienate their faithful services from their noble master, but that they might lend their aid in preserving peace betwixt France and Burgundy — an end so excellent in itself, and so obviously tending to the welfare of both countries, and of the reigning princes of either.

The notice of so great and so wise a king was in itself a mighty bribe; promises did much, and direct gifts, which the customs of the time permitted the Burgundian courtiers to accept without scruple, did still more. During a boar hunt in the forest, while the Duke, eager always upon the immediate object, whether business or pleasure, gave himself entirely up to the ardour of the chase, Louis, unrestrained by his presence, sought and found the means of speaking secretly and separately to many of those who were reported to have most interest with Charles, among whom D'Hymbercourt and Comines were not forgotten; nor did he fail to mix up the advances which he made towards those two distinguished persons with praises of the valour and military skill of the first, and of the profound sagacity and literary talents of the future historian of the period.

Such an opportunity of personally conciliating, or, if the reader pleases, corrupting, the ministers of Charles, was perhaps what the King had proposed to himself as a principal object of his visit, even if his art should fail to

cajole the Duke himself. The connexion betwixt France and Burgundy was so close, that most of the nobles belonging to the latter country had hopes or actual interests connected with the former, which the favour of Louis could advance or his personal displeasure destroy. Formed for this and every other species of intrigue, liberal to profusion when it was necessary to advance his plans, and skilful in putting the most plausible colour upon his proposals and presents, the King contrived to reconcile the spirit of the proud to their profit, and to hold out to the real or pretended patriot the good of both France and Burgundy as the ostensible motive; whilst the party's own private interest, like the concealed wheel of some machine, worked not the less powerfully that its operations were kept out of sight. For each man he had a suitable bait and a proper mode of presenting it: he poured the guerdon into the sleeve of those who were too proud to extend their hand, and trusted that his bounty, though it descended like the dew without noise and imperceptibly, would not fail to produce, in due season, a plentiful crop of goodwill at least, perhaps of good offices, to the donor. In fine, although he had been long paving the way by his ministers for an establishment of such an interest in the court of Burgundy as should be advantageous to the interests of France, Louis's own personal exertions, directed doubtless by the information of which he was previously possessed, did more to accomplish that object in a few hours than his agents had effected in years of negotiation.

One man alone the King missed whom he had been particularly desirous of conciliating, and that was the Count de Crèvecœur, whose firmness, during his con-

duct as envoy at Plessis, far from exciting Louis's resentment, had been viewed as a reason for making him his own if possible. He was not particularly gratified when he learnt that the count, at the head of an hundred lances, was gone towards the frontiers of Brabant to assist the bishop, in case of necessity, against William de la Marck and his discontented subjects; but he consoled himself that the appearance of this force, joined with the directions which he had sent by faithful messengers, would serve to prevent any premature disturbances in that country, the breaking out of which might, he foresaw, render his present situation very precarious.

The court upon this occasion dined in the forest when the hour of noon arrived, as was common in those great hunting parties; an arrangement at this time particularly agreeable to the Duke, desirous as he was to abridge that ceremonious and deferential solemnity with which he was otherwise under the necessity of receiving King Louis. In fact, the King's knowledge of human nature had in one particular misled him on this remarkable occasion. He thought that the Duke would have been inexpressibly flattered to have received such a mark of condescension and confidence from his liege lord; but he forgot that the dependence of this dukedom upon the crown of France was privately the subject of galling mortification to a prince so powerful, so wealthy, and so proud as Charles, whose aim it certainly was to establish an independent kingdom. The presence of the King at the court of the Duke of Burgundy imposed on that prince the necessity of exhibiting himself in the subordinate character of a vassal, and of discharging many rites of feudal observance and deference, which, to

one of his haughty disposition, resembled derogation from the character of a sovereign prince, which on all occasions he affected as far as possible to sustain.

But although it was possible to avoid much ceremony by having the dinner upon the green turf, with sound of bugles, broaching of barrels, and all the freedom of a sylvan meal, it was necessary that the evening repast should, even for that very reason, be held with more than usual solemnity.

Previous orders for this purpose had been given, and, upon returning to Péronne, King Louis found a banquet prepared with such a profusion of splendour and magnificence, as became the wealth of his formidable vassal, possessed as he was of almost all the Low Countries, then the richest portion of Europe. At the head of the long board, which groaned under plate of gold and silver, filled to profusion with the most exquisite dainties, sat the Duke, and on his right hand, upon a seat more elevated than his own, was placed his royal guest. Behind him stood on one side the son of the Duke of Gueldres, who officiated as his grand carver, on the other Le Glorieux, his jester, without whom he seldom stirred; for, like most men of his hasty and coarse character, Charles carried to extremity the general taste of that age for court fools and jesters — experiencing that pleasure in their display of eccentricity and mental infirmity which his more acute, but not more benevolent, rival loved better to extract from marking the imperfections of humanity in its nobler specimens, and finding subject for mirth in the 'fears of the brave and follies of the wise.' And, indeed, if the anecdote related by Brantôme be true, that a court fool, having overheard Louis, in one

of his agonies of repentant devotion, confess his accession to the poisoning of his brother, Henry Count of Guyenne, divulged it next day at dinner before the assembled court, that monarch might be supposed rather more than satisfied with the pleasantries of professed jesters for the rest of his life.

But, on the present occasion, Louis neglected not to take notice of the favourite buffoon of the Duke, and to applaud his repartees; which he did the rather that he thought he saw that the folly of Le Glorieux, however grossly it was sometimes displayed, covered more than the usual quantity of shrewd and caustic observation proper to his class.

In fact, Tiel Wetzweiler, called Le Glorieux, was by no means a jester of the common stamp. He was a tall, fine-looking man, excellent at many exercises, which seemed scarce reconcilable with mental imbecility, because it must have required patience and attention to attain them. He usually followed the Duke to the chase and to the fight; and at Montl'héry, when Charles was in considerable personal danger, wounded in the throat, and likely to be made prisoner by a French knight who had hold of his horse's rein, Tiel Wetzweiler charged the assailant so forcibly as to overthrow him and disengage his master. Perhaps he was afraid of this being thought too serious a service for a person of his condition, and that it might excite him enemies among those knights and nobles who had left the care of their master's person to the court fool. At any rate, he chose rather to be laughed at than praised for his achievement, and made such gasconading boasts of his exploits in the battle, that most men thought the rescue of Charles was as

ideal as the rest of his tale; and it was on this occasion he acquired the title of Le Glorieux (or the boastful), by which he was ever afterwards distinguished.

Le Glorieux was dressed very richly, but with little of the usual distinction of his profession, and that little rather of a symbolical than a very literal character. His head was not shorn; on the contrary, he wore a profusion of long curled hair, which descended from under his cap, and joining with a well-arranged and handsomely trimmed beard, set off features which, but for a wild lightness of eye, might have been termed handsome. A ridge of scarlet velvet, carried across the top of his cap, indicated, rather than positively represented, the professional cock's-comb, which distinguished the headgear of a fool in right of office. His bauble, made of ebony, was crested, as usual, with a fool's head, with ass's ears formed of silver; but so small, and so minutely carved, that, till very closely examined, it might have passed for an official baton of a more solemn character. These were the only badges of his office which his dress exhibited. In other respects, it was such as to match with that of the most courtly nobles. His bonnet displayed a medal of gold; he wore a chain of the same metal around his neck; and the fashion of his rich garments was not much more fantastic than those of young gallants who have their clothes made in the extremity of the existing fashion.

To this personage Charles, and Louis, in imitation of his host, often addressed themselves during the entertainment; and both seemed to manifest, by hearty laughter, their amusement at the answers of Le Glorieux.

'Whose seats be those that are vacant?' said Charles to the jester.

'One of those at least should be mine by right of succession, Charles,' replied Le Glorieux.

'Why so, knave?' said Charles.

'Because they belong to the Sieur D'Hymbercourt and Des Comines, who are gone so far to fly their falcons that they have forgot their supper. They who would rather look at a kite on the wing than a pheasant on the board are of kin to the fool, and he should succeed to the stools, as a part of their movable estate.'

'That is but a stale jest, my friend Tiel,' said the Duke; 'but, fools or wise men, here come the defaulters.'

As he spoke, Comines and D'Hymbercourt entered the room, and, after having made their reverence to the two princes, assumed in silence the seats which were left vacant for them.

'What ho! sirs,' exclaimed the Duke, addressing them, 'your sport has been either very good or very bad, to lead you so far and so late. Sir Philip des Comines, you are dejected; hath D'Hymbercourt won so heavy a wager on you? You are a philosopher, and should not grieve at bad fortune. By St. George! D'Hymbercourt looks as sad as thou dost. How now, sirs? Have you found no game? or have you lost your falcons? or has a witch crossed your way? or has the Wild Huntsman [1] met you in the forest? By my honour, you seem as if you were come to a funeral, not a festival.'

While the Duke spoke, the eyes of the company were all directed towards D'Hymbercourt and Des Comines;

[1] The famous apparition, sometimes called *Le Grand Veneur*. Sully gives some account of this hunting spectre.

and the embarrassment and dejection of their countenances, neither being of that class of persons to whom such expression of anxious melancholy was natural, became so remarkable, that the mirth and laughter of the company, which the rapid circulation of goblets of excellent wine had raised to a considerable height, was gradually hushed, and, without being able to assign any reason for such a change in their spirits, men spoke in whispers to each other, as on the eve of expecting some strange and important tidings.

'What means this silence, Messires?' said the Duke, elevating his voice, which was naturally harsh. 'If you bring these strange looks, and this stranger silence, into festivity, we shall wish you had abode in the marshes seeking for herons, or rather for woodcocks and howlets.'

'My gracious lord,' said Des Comines, 'as we were about to return hither from the forest, we met the Count of Crèvecœur.'

'How!' said the Duke; 'already returned from Brabant? but he found all well there, doubtless?'

'The count himself will presently give your Grace an account of his news,' said D'Hymbercourt, 'which we have heard but imperfectly.'

'Body of me, where is the count?' said the Duke.

'He changes his dress, to wait upon your Highness,' answered D'Hymbecourt.

'His dress! *Saint-bleau!*' exclaimed the impatient prince, 'what care I for his dress? I think you have conspired with him to drive me mad.'

'Or rather, to be plain,' said Des Comines, 'he wishes to communicate these news at a private audience.'

'*Teste-dieu!* my lord king,' said Charles, 'this is ever the way our counsellors serve us. If they have got hold of aught which they consider as important for our ear, they look as grave upon the matter, and are as proud of their burden as an ass of a new pack-saddle. Some one bid Crèvecœur come to us directly! He comes from the frontiers of Liege, and *we*, at least (he laid some emphasis on the pronoun), have no secrets in that quarter which we would shun to have proclaimed before the assembled world.'

All perceived that the Duke had drunk so much wine as to increase the native obstinacy of his disposition; and though many would willingly have suggested that the present was neither a time for hearing news, nor for taking counsel, yet all knew the impetuosity of his temper too well to venture on further interference, and sat in anxious expectation of the tidings which the count might have to communicate.

A brief interval intervened, during which the Duke remained looking eagerly to the door, as if in a transport of impatience, whilst the guests sat with their eyes bent on the table, as if to conceal their curiosity and anxiety. Louis alone maintaining perfect composure, continued his conversation alternately with the grand carver and with the jester.

At length Crèvecœur entered, and was presently saluted by the hurried question of his master, 'What news from Liege and Brabant, sir count? The report of your arrival has chased mirth from our table; we hope your actual presence will bring it back to us.'

'My liege and master,' answered the count, in a firm but melancholy tone, 'the news which I bring you

are fitter for the council-board than the feasting-table.'

'Out with them, man, if they were tidings from Antichrist!' said the Duke; 'but I can guess them: the Liegeois are again in mutiny.'

'They are, my lord,' said Crèvecœur, very gravely.

'Look there, man,' said the Duke, 'I have hit at once on what you have been so much afraid to mention to me: the harebrained burghers are again in arms. It could not be in better time, for we may at present have the advice of our own suzerain,' bowing to King Louis, with eyes which spoke the most bitter, though suppressed, resentment, 'to teach us how such mutineers should be dealt with. Hast thou more news in thy packet? Out with them, and then answer for yourself why you went not forward to assist the bishop.'

'My lord, the further tidings are heavy for me to tell, and will be afflicting to you to hear. No aid of mine, or of living chivalry, could have availed the excellent prelate. William de la Marck, united with the insurgent Liegeois, has taken his castle of Schonwaldt, and murdered him in his own hall.'

'*Murdered him!*' repeated the Duke, in a deep and low tone, but which nevertheless was heard from the one end of the hall in which they were assembled to the other; 'thou hast been imposed upon, Crèvecœur, by some wild report; it is impossible!'

'Alas, my lord!' said the count, 'I have it from an eyewitness, an archer of the King of France's Scottish Guard, who was in the hall when the murder was committed by William de la Marck's order.'

'And who was doubtless aiding and abetting in the

horrible sacrilege!' exclaimed the Duke, starting up and stamping with his foot with such fury, that he dashed in pieces the footstool which was placed before him. 'Bar the doors of this hall, gentlemen — secure the windows — let no stranger stir from his seat, upon pain of instant death! Gentlemen of my chamber, draw your swords.' And turning upon Louis, he advanced his own hand slowly and deliberately to the hilt of his weapon; while the King, without either showing fear or assuming a defensive posture, only said —

'These news, fair cousin, have staggered your reason.'

'No!' replied the Duke, in a terrible tone, 'but they have awakened a just resentment, which I have too long suffered to be stifled by trivial considerations of circumstance and place. Murderer of thy brother! — rebel against thy parent! — tyrant over thy subjects! — treacherous ally! — perjured king! — dishonoured gentleman! — thou art in my power, and I thank God for it.'

'Rather thank my folly,' said the King; 'for when we met on equal terms at Montl'héry, methinks you wished yourself farther from me than we are now.'

The Duke still held his hand on the hilt of his sword, but refrained to draw his weapon, or to strike a foe who offered no sort of resistance which could in any wise provoke violence.

Meanwhile, wild and general confusion spread itself through the hall. The doors were now fastened and guarded by order of the Duke; but several of the French nobles, few as they were in number, started from their seats, and prepared for the defence of their sovereign. Louis had spoken not a word either to Orleans or Dunois since they were liberated from restraint at the Castle of

Loches, if it could be termed liberation to be dragged in King Louis's train, objects of suspicion evidently rather than of respect and regard; but, nevertheless, the voice of Dunois was first heard above the tumult addressing himself to the Duke of Burgundy. 'Sir Duke, you have forgotten that you are a vassal of France, and that we, your guests, are Frenchmen. If you lift a hand against our monarch, prepare to sustain the utmost effects of our despair; for, credit me, we shall feast as high with the blood of Burgundy as we have done with its wine. Courage, my Lord of Orleans; and you, gentlemen of France, form yourselves round Dunois, and do as he does!'

It was in that moment when a king might see upon what tempers he could certainly rely. The few independent nobles and knights who attended Louis, most of whom had only received from him frowns or discountenance, unappalled by the display of infinitely superior force, and the certainty of destruction in case they came to blows, hastened to array themselves around Dunois, and, led by him, to press towards the head of the table where the contending princes were seated.

On the contrary, the tools and agents whom Louis had dragged forward out of their fitting and natural places into importance which was not due to them, showed cowardice and cold heart, and, remaining still in their seats, seemed resolved not to provoke their fate by intermeddling, whatever might become of their benefactor.

The first of the more generous party was the venerable Lord Crawford, who, with an agility which no one would have expected at his years, forced his way through all opposition, which was the less violent, as many of the

Burgundians, either from a point of honour or a secret inclination to prevent Louis's impending fate, gave way to him, and threw himself boldly between the King and the Duke. He then placed his bonnet, from which his white hair escaped in dishevelled tresses, upon one side of his head; his pale cheek and withered brow coloured, and his aged eye lightened with all the fire of a gallant who is about to dare some desperate action. His cloak was flung over one shoulder, and his action intimated his readiness to wrap it about his left arm, while he unsheathed his sword with his right.

'I have fought for his father and his grandsire,' that was all he said, 'and, by St. Andrew, end the matter as it will, I will not fail him at this pinch.'

What has taken some time to narrate happened, in fact, with the speed of light; for so soon as the Duke assumed his threatening posture, Crawford had thrown himself betwixt him and the object of his vengeance; and the French gentlemen, drawing together as fast as they could, were crowding to the same point.

The Duke of Burgundy still remained with his hand on his sword, and seemed in the act of giving the signal for a general onset, which must necessarily have ended in the massacre of the weaker party, when Crèvecœur rushed forward and exclaimed, in a voice like a trumpet, 'My liege Lord of Burgundy, beware what you do! This is *your* hall, you are the King's vassal; do not spill the blood of your guest on your hearth, the blood of your sovereign on the throne you have erected for him, and to which he came under your safeguard. For the sake of your house's honour, do not attempt to revenge one horrid murder by another yet worse!'

'Out of my road, Crèvecœur,' answered the Duke, 'and let my vengeance pass! Out of my path! The wrath of kings is to be dreaded like that of Heaven.'

'Only when, like that of Heaven, it is *just*,' answered Crèvecœur firmly. 'Let me pray of you, my lord, to rein the violence of your temper, however justly offended. And for you, my lords of France, where resistance is unavailing, let me recommend you to forbear whatever may lead towards bloodshed.'

'He is right,' said Louis, whose coolness forsook him not in that dreadful moment, and who easily foresaw that if a brawl should commence, more violence would be dared and done in the heat of blood than was likely to be attempted if peace were preserved. 'My cousin Orleans — kind Dunois — and you, my trusty Crawford — bring not on ruin and bloodshed by taking offence too hastily. Our cousin the Duke is chafed at the tidings of the death of a near and loving friend, the venerable Bishop of Liege, whose slaughter we lament as he does. Ancient and, unhappily, recent subjects of jealousy lead him to suspect us of having abetted a crime which our bosom abhors. Should our host murder us on this spot — us, his king and his kinsman, under a false impression of our being accessory to this unhappy accident, our fate will be little lightened, but, on the contrary, greatly aggravated, by your stirring. Therefore, stand back, Crawford. Were it my last word, I speak as a king to his officer, and demand obedience. Stand back, and, if it is required, yield up your sword. I command you to do so, and your oath obliges you to obey.'

'True — true, my lord,' said Crawford, stepping back,

and returning to the sheath the blade he had half drawn. 'It may be all very true; but, by my honour, if I were at the head of threescore and ten of my brave fellows, instead of being loaded with more than the like number of years, I would try whether I could have some reason out of these fine gallants, with their golden chains and looped-up bonnets, with braw-warld dyes and devices on them.'

The Duke stood with his eyes fixed on the ground for a considerable space, and then said, with bitter irony, 'Crèvecœur, you say well; and it concerns our honour, that our obligations to this great king, our honoured and loving guest, be not so hastily adjusted, as in our hasty anger we had at first proposed. We will so act, that all Europe shall acknowledge the justice of our proceedings. Gentlemen of France, you must render up your arms to my officers! Your master has broken the truce, and has no title to take further benefit of it. In compassion, however, to your sentiments of honour, and in respect to the rank which he hath disgraced, and the race from which he hath degenerated, we ask not our cousin Louis's sword.'

'Not one of us,' said Dunois, 'will resign our weapon, or quit this hall, unless we are assured of at least our king's safety, in life and limb.'

'Nor will a man of the Scottish Guard,' exclaimed Crawford, 'lay down his arms, save at the command of the King of France, or his High Constable.'

'Brave Dunois,' said Louis, 'and you, my trusty Crawford, your zeal will do me injury instead of benefit. I trust,' he added, with dignity, 'in my rightful cause more than in a vain resistance, which would but

cost the lives of my best and bravest. Give up your swords; the noble Burgundians who accept such honourable pledges will be more able than you are to protect both you and me. Give up your swords. It is I who command you.'

It was thus that, in this dreadful emergency, Louis showed the promptitude of decision and clearness of judgment which alone could have saved his life. He was aware that until actual blows were exchanged he should have the assistance of most of the nobles present to moderate the fury of their prince; but that, were a *mêlée* once commenced, he himself and his few adherents must be instantly murdered. At the same time, his worst enemies confessed that his demeanour had in it nothing either of meanness or cowardice. He shunned to aggravate into frenzy the wrath of the Duke; but he neither deprecated not seemed to fear it, and continued to look on him with the calm and fixed attention with which a brave man eyes the menacing gestures of a lunatic, whilst conscious that his own steadiness and composure operate as an insensible and powerful check on the rage even of insanity.

Crawford, at the King's command, threw his sword to Crévecœur, saying, 'Take it, and the devil give you joy of it! It is no dishonour to the rightful owner who yields it, for we have had no fair play.'

'Hold, gentlemen,' said the Duke, in a broken voice, as one whom passion had almost deprived of utterance, 'retain your swords; it is sufficient you promise not to use them. And you, Louis of Valois, must regard yourself as my prisoner, until you are cleared of having abetted sacrilege and murder. Have him to the castle.

Have him to Earl Herbert's Tower. Let him have six gentlemen of his train to attend him, such as he shall choose. My Lord of Crawford, your guard must leave the castle, and shall be honourably quartered elsewhere. Up with every drawbridge, and down with every portcullis. Let the gates of the town be trebly guarded. Draw the floating-bridge to the right-hand side of the river. Bring round the castle my band of Black Walloons, and treble the sentinels on every post! You, D'Hymbercourt, look that patrols of horse and foot make the round of the town every half hour during the night, and every hour during the next day — if indeed such ward shall be necessary after daybreak, for it is like we may be sudden in this matter. Look to the person of Louis, as you love your life!'

He started from the table in fierce and moody haste, darted a glance of mortal enmity at the King, and rushed out of the apartment.

'Sirs,' said the King, looking with dignity around him, 'grief for the death of his ally hath made your prince frantic. I trust you know better your duty, as knights and noblemen, than to abet him in his treasonable violence against the person of his liege lord.'

At this moment was heard in the streets the sound of drums beating and horns blowing, to call out the soldiery in every direction.

'We are,' said Crèvecœur, who acted as the marshal of the Duke's household, 'subjects of Burgundy, and must do our duty as such. Our hopes and prayers, and our efforts, will not be wanting to bring about peace and union between your Majesty and our liege lord. Meantime, we must obey his commands. These other

lords and knights will be proud to contribute to the convenience of the illustrious Duke of Orleans, of the brave Dunois, and the stout Lord Crawford. I myself must be your Majesty's chamberlain, and bring you to your apartments in other guise than would be my desire, remembering the hospitality of Plessis. You have only to choose your attendants, whom the Duke's commands limit to six.'

'Then,' said the King, looking around him, and thinking for a moment, 'I desire the attendance of Oliver le Dain, of a private of my Life Guard, called Balafré, who may be unarmed if you will, of Tristan l'Hermite, with two of his people, and my right loyal and trusty philosopher, Martius Galeotti.'

'Your Majesty's will shall be complied with in all points,' said the Count de Crèvecœur. 'Galeotti,' he added, after a moment's inquiry, 'is, I understand, at present supping in some buxom company, but he shall instantly be sent for; the others will obey your Majesty's command upon the instant.'

'Forward, then, to the new abode, which the hospitality of our cousin provides for us,' said the King. 'We know it is strong, and have only to hope it may be in a corresponding degree safe.'

'Heard you the choice which King Louis has made of his attendants?' said Le Glorieux to Count Crèvecœur apart, as they followed Louis from the hall.

'Surely, my merry gossip,' replied the count. 'What hast thou to object to them?'

'Nothing — nothing, only they are a rare election! A panderly barber, a Scottish hired cut-throat, a chief hangman and his two assistants, and a thieving charla-

tan. I will along with you, Crèvecœur, and take a lesson in the degrees of roguery, from observing your skill in marshalling them. The devil himself could scarce have summoned such a synod, or have been a better president amongst them.'

Accordingly, the all-licensed jester, seizing the count's arm familiarly, began to march along with him, while, under a strong guard, yet forgetting no semblance of respect, he conducted the King towards his new apartment.[1]

[1] See Note 11.

CHAPTER XXVIII

UNCERTAINTY

Then happy low, lie down;
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

Henry IV, Part II.

FORTY men-at-arms, carrying alternately naked swords and blazing torches, served as the escort, or rather the guard, of King Louis, from the town-hall of Péronne to the castle; and as he entered within its darksome and gloomy strength, it seemed as if a voice screamed in his ear that warning which the Florentine has inscribed over the portal of the infernal regions, 'Leave all hope behind!'

At that moment, perhaps, some feeling of remorse might have crossed the King's mind, had he thought on the hundreds, nay thousands, whom, without cause, or on light suspicion, he had committed to the abysses of his dungeons, deprived of all hope of liberty, and loathing even the life to which they clung by animal instinct.

The broad glare of the torches outfacing the pale moon, which was more obscured on this than on the former night, and the red smoky light which they dispersed around the ancient buildings, gave a darker shade to that huge donjon, called the Earl Herbert's Tower. It was the same that Louis had viewed with misgiving presentiment on the preceding evening, and of which he was now doomed to become an inhabitant,

under the terror of what violence soever the wrathful temper of his overgrown vassal might tempt him to exercise in those secret recesses of despotism.

To aggravate the King's painful feelings, he saw, as he crossed the court-yard, several bodies, over each of which had been hastily flung a military cloak. He was not long of discerning that they were corpses of slain archers of the Scottish Guard, who having disputed, as the Count Crèvecœur informed him, the command given them to quit the post near the King's apartments, a brawl had ensued between them and the Duke's Walloon body-guards, and before it could be composed by the officers on either side, several lives had been lost.

'My trusty Scots!' said the King, as he looked upon this melancholy spectacle; 'had they brought only man to man, all Flanders — ay and Burgundy to boot — had not furnished champions to mate you.'

'Yes, an it please your Majesty,' said Balafré, who attended close behind the King, 'Maistery mows the meadow: few men can fight more than two at once. I myself never care to meet three, unless it be in the way of special duty, when one must not stand to count heads.'

'Art thou there, old acquaintance?' said the King, looking behind him; 'then I have one true subject with me yet.'

'And a faithful minister, whether in your councils, or in his offices about your royal person,' whispered Oliver le Dain.

'We are all faithful,' said Tristan l'Hermite, gruffly; 'for should they put to death your Majesty, there is not one of us whom they would suffer to survive you, even if we would.'

'Now, that is what I call good corporal bail for fidelity,' said Le Glorieux, who, as already mentioned, with the restlessness proper to an infirm brain, had thrust himself into their company.

Meanwhile, the seneschal, hastily summoned, was turning with laborious effort the ponderous key which opened the reluctant gate of the huge Gothic keep, and was at last fain to call for the assistance of one of Crèvecœur's attendants. When they had succeeded, six men entered with torches, and showed the way through a narrow and winding passage, commanded at different points by shot-holes from vaults and casements constructed behind, and in the thickness of the massive walls. At the end of this passage arose a stair of corresponding rudeness, consisting of huge blocks of stone, roughly dressed with the hammer, and of unequal height. Having mounted this ascent, a strong iron-clenched door admitted them to what had been the great hall of the donjon, lighted but very faintly even during the daytime, for the apertures, diminished in appearance by the excessive thickness of the walls, resembled slits rather than windows, and now, but for the blaze of the torches, almost perfectly dark. Two or three bats, and other birds of evil presage, roused by the unusual glare, flew against the lights and threatened to extinguish them; while the seneschal formally apologised to the King that the state-hall had not been put in order, such was the hurry of the notice sent to him; and adding, that, in truth, the apartment had not been in use for twenty years, and rarely before that time, so far as ever he had heard, since the time of King Charles the Simple.

'King Charles the Simple!' echoed Louis; 'I know the

history of the tower now. He was here murdered by his treacherous vassal, Herbert, Earl of Vermandois, — so say our annals. I knew there was something concerning the Castle of Péronne which dwelt on my mind, though I could not recall the circumstance. *Here*, then, my predecessor was slain?'

'Not here, not exactly here, and please your Majesty,' said the old seneschal, stepping with the eager haste of a cicerone, who shows the curiosities of such a place — 'not *here*, but in the side-chamber a little onward, which opens from your Majesty's bedchamber.'

He hastily opened a wicket at the upper end of the hall, which led into a bedchamber, small, as is usual in such old buildings, but, even for that reason, rather more comfortable than the waste hall through which they had passed. Some hasty preparations had been here made for the King's accommodation. Arras had been tacked up, a fire lighted in the rusty grate, which had been long unused, and a pallet laid down for those gentlemen who were to pass the night in his chamber, as was then usual.

'We will get beds in the hall for the rest of your attendants,' said the garrulous old man; 'but we have had such brief notice, if it please your Majesty. And if it please your Majesty to look upon this little wicket behind the arras, it opens into the little old cabinet in the thickness of the wall where Charles was slain, and there is a secret passage from below, which admitted the men who were to deal with him. And your Majesty, whose eyesight I hope is better than mine, may see the blood still on the oak floor, though the thing was done five hundred years ago.'

While he thus spoke, he kept fumbling to open the postern of which he spoke, until the King said, 'Forbear, old man — forbear but a little while, when thou mayest have a newer tale to tell, and fresher blood to show. My Lord of Crèvecœur, what say you?'

'I can but answer, sire, that these two interior apartments are as much at your Majesty's disposal as those in your own castle at Plessis, and that Crèvecœur, a name never blackened by treachery or assassination, has the guard of the exterior defences of it.'

'But the private passage into that closet, of which the old man speaks!' This King Louis said in a low and anxious tone, holding Crèvecœur's arm fast with one hand, and pointing to the wicket door with the other.

'It must be some dream of Mornay's,' said Crèvecœur, 'or some old and absurd tradition of the place; but we will examine.'

He was about to open the closet door, when Louis answered, 'No, Crèvecœur, no; your honour is sufficient warrant. But what will your duke do with me, Crèvecœur? He cannot hope to keep me long a prisoner; and — in short, give me your opinion, Crèvecœur.'

'My lord and sire,' said the count, 'how the Duke of Burgundy must resent this horrible cruelty on the person of his near relative and ally is for your Majesty to judge; and what right he may have to consider it as instigated by your Majesty's emissaries you only can know. But my master is noble in his disposition, and made incapable, even by the very strength of his passions, of any underhand practices. Whatever he does will be done in the face of day and of the two nations. And I can but add, that it will be the wish of every counsellor

around him — excepting perhaps one — that he should behave in this matter with mildness and generosity, as well as justice.'

'Ah! Crèvecœur,' said Louis, taking his hand as if affected by some painful recollections, 'how happy is the prince who has counsellors near him who can guard him against the effects of his own angry passions! Their names will be read in golden letters, when the history of his reign is perused. Noble Crèvecœur, had it been my lot to have such as thou art about *my* person!'

'It had in that case been your Majesty's study to have got rid of them as fast as you could,' said Le Glorieux.

'Aha! Sir Wisdom, art thou there?' said Louis, turning round, and instantly changing the pathetic tone in which he had addressed Crèvecœur, and adopting with facility one which had a turn of gaiety in it; 'hast *thou* followed us hither?'

'Ay, sir,' answered Le Glorieux, 'wisdom must follow in motley, where folly leads the way in purple.'

'How shall I construe that, Sir Solomon,' answered Louis; 'wouldst thou change conditions with me?'

'Not I, by my halidome,' quoth Le Glorieux, 'if you would give me fifty crowns to boot.'

'Why, wherefore so? Methinks I could be well enough contented, as princes go, to have thee for my king.'

'Ay, sire,' replied Le Glorieux; 'but the question is, whether, judging of your Majesty's wit from its having lodged you here, I should not have cause to be ashamed of having so dull a fool.'

'Peace, sirrah!' said the Count of Crèvecœur; 'your tongue runs too fast.'

'Let it take its course,' said the King; 'I know of no

such fair subject of raillery as the follies of those who should know better. Here, my sagacious friend, take this purse of gold, and with it the advice, never to be so great a fool as to deem yourself wiser than other people. Prithee, do me so much favour as to inquire after my astrologer, Martius Galeotti, and send him hither to me presently.'

'I will, without fail, my liege,' answered the jester; 'and I wot well I shall find him at Jan Dopplethur's; for philosophers, as well as fools, know where the best wine is sold.'

'Let me pray for free entrance for this learned person through your guards, Seignior de Crèvecœur,' said Louis.

'For his entrance, unquestionably,' answered the count; 'but it grieves me to add, that my instructions do not authorise me to permit any one to quit your Majesty's apartments. I wish your Majesty a good night,' he subjoined, 'and will presently make such arrangements in the outer hall as may put the gentlemen who are to inhabit it more at their ease.'

'Give yourself no trouble for them, sir count,' replied the King, 'they are men accustomed to set hardships at defiance; and, to speak truth, excepting that I wish to see Galeotti, I would desire as little further communication from without this night as may be consistent with your instructions.'

'These are, to leave your Majesty,' replied Crèvecœur, 'undisputed possession of your own apartments. Such are my master's orders.'

'Your master, Count Crèvecœur,' answered Louis, 'whom I may also term mine, is a right gracious master. My dominions,' he added, 'are somewhat shrunk in com-

pass, now that they have dwindled to an old hall and a bedchamber; but they are still wide enough for all the subjects which I can at present boast of.'

The Count of Crèvecœur took his leave; and, shortly after, they could hear the noise of the sentinels moving to their posts, accompanied with the word of command from the officers, and the hasty tread of the guards who were relieved. All length all became still, and the only sound which filled the air was the sluggish murmur of the river Somme, as it glided, deep and muddy, under the walls of the castle.

'Go into the hall, my mates,' said Louis to his train; 'but do not lie down to sleep. Hold yourselves in readiness, for there is still something to be done to-night, and that of moment.'

Oliver and Tristan retired to the hall accordingly, in which Le Balafrê and the provost-marshal's two officers had remained when the others entered the bedchamber. They found that those without had thrown fagots enough upon the fire to serve the purpose of light and heat at the same time, and, wrapping themselves in their cloaks, had sat down on the floor, in postures which variously expressed the discomposure and dejection of their minds. Oliver and Tristan saw nothing better to be done than to follow their example; and, never very good friends in the days of their court prosperity, they were both equally reluctant to repose confidence in each other upon this strange and sudden reverse of fortune. So that the whole party sat in silent dejection.

Meanwhile, their master underwent, in the retirement of his secret chamber, agonies that might have atoned for some of those which had been imposed by

his command. He paced the room with short and unequal steps, often stood still and clasped his hands together, and gave loose, in short, to agitation, which, in public, he had found himself able to suppress so successfully. At length, pausing, and wringing his hands, he planted himself opposite to the wicket-door, which had been pointed out by old Mornay as leading to the scene of the murder of one of his predecessors, and gradually gave voice to his feelings in a broken soliloquy.

'Charles the Simple — Charles the Simple! What will posterity call the Eleventh Louis, whose blood will probably soon refresh the stains of thine? Louis the Fool — — Louis the Driveller — Louis the Infatuated — are all terms too slight to mark the extremity of my idiocy! To think these hot-headed Liegeois, to whom rebellion is as natural as their food, would remain quiet — to dream that the Wild Beast of Ardennes would, for a moment, be interrupted in his career of force and bloodthirsty brutality — to suppose that I could use reason and arguments to any good purpose with Charles of Burgundy, until I had tried the force of such exhortations with success upon a wild bull! Fool, and double idiot that I was! But the villain Martius shall not escape. He has been at the bottom of this, he and the vile priest, the detestable Balue.[1] If I ever get out of this danger, I will tear from his head the cardinal's cap, though I pull the scalp along with it! But the other traitor is in my hands: I am yet king enough — have yet an empire roomy enough — for the punishment of the quack-salving, word-mongering, star-gazing, lie-coining impostor, who has at once made a prisoner and a dupe

[1] See Note 12.

of me! The conjunction of the constellations — ay, the conjunction! He must talk nonsense which would scarce gull a thrice-sodden sheep's head, and I must be idiot enough to think I understood him! But we shall see presently what the conjunction hath really boded. But first let me to my devotions.'

Above the little door, in memory perhaps of the deed which had been done within, was a rude niche, containing a crucifix cut in stone. Upon this emblem the King fixed his eyes, as if about to kneel, but stopped short, as if he applied to the blessed image the principles of worldly policy, and deemed it rash to approach its presence without having secured the private intercession of some supposed favourite. He therefore turned from the crucifix as unworthy to look upon it, and selecting from the images with which, as often mentioned, his hat was completely garnished, a representation of the Lady of Cléry, knelt down before it, and made the following extraordinary prayer; in which, it is to be observed, the grossness of his superstition induced him, in some degree, to consider the virgin of Cléry as a different person from the Madonna of Embrun, a favourite idol, to whom he often paid his vows.

'Sweet Lady of Cléry,' he exclaimed, clasping his hands and beating his breast while he spoke, 'blessed Mother of Mercy! thou who art omnipotent with Omnipotence, have compassion with me a sinner! It is true that I have something neglected thee for thy blessed sister of Embrun; but I am a king, my power is great, my wealth boundless; and, were it otherwise, I would double the *gabelle* on my subjects, rather than not pay my debts to you both. Undo these iron doors — fill

up these tremendous moats — lead me, as a mother leads a child, out of this present and pressing danger! If I have given thy sister the county of Boulogne to be held of her for ever, have I no means of showing devotion to thee also? Thou shalt have the broad and rich province of Champagne; and its vineyards shall pour their abundance into thy convent. I had promised the province to my brother Charles; but he, thou knowest, is dead — poisoned by that wicked abbé of St. John d'Angély, whom, if I live, I will punish! I promised this once before, but this time, I will keep my word. If I had any knowledge of the crime, believe, dearest patroness, it was because I knew no better method of quieting the discontents of my kingdom. O, do not reckon that old debt to my account to-day; but be, as thou hast ever been, kind, benignant, and easy to be entreated! Sweetest Lady, work with thy Child, that He will pardon all past sins, and one — one little deed which I must do this night; nay, it is no *sin*, dearest Lady of Cléry — no sin, but an act of justice privately administered, for the villain is the greatest impostor that ever poured falsehood into a prince's ear, and leans besides to the filthy heresy of the Greeks. He is not deserving of thy protection, leave him to my care; and hold it as good service that I rid the world of him, for the man is a necromancer and wizard, that is not worth thy thought and care — a dog, the extinction of whose life ought to be of as little consequence in thine eyes as the treading out a spark that drops from a lamp, or springs from a fire. Think not of this little matter, gentlest, kindest Lady, but only consider how thou canst best aid me in my troubles! and I here bind my royal signet to thy effigy, in token

that I will keep my word concerning the county of Champagne, and that this shall be the last time I will trouble thee in affairs of blood, knowing thou art so kind, so gentle, and so tender-hearted.'

After this extraordinary contract with the object of his adoration, Louis recited, apparently with deep devotion, the seven penitential psalms in Latin, and several aves and prayers especially belonging to the service of the Virgin. He then arose, satisfied that he had secured the intercession of the saint to whom he had prayed, the rather, as he craftily reflected, that most of the sins for which he had requested her mediation on former occasions had been of a different character, and that, therefore, the Lady of Cléry was less likely to consider him as a hardened and habitual shedder of blood, than the other saints whom he had more frequently made confidants of his crimes in that respect.[1]

When he had thus cleared his conscience, or rather whited it over like a sepulchre, the King thrust his head out at the door of the hall, and summoned Le Balafré into his apartment. 'My good soldier,' he said, 'thou hast served me long, and hast had little promotion. We are here in a case where I may either live or die; but I would not willingly die an ungrateful man, or leave, so far as the saints may place it in my power, either a friend or an enemy unrecompensed. Now, I have a friend to be rewarded, that is thyself — an enemy to be punished according to his deserts, and that is the base, treacherous villain, Martius Galeotti, who, by his impostures and specious falsehoods, has trained me hither into the power of my mortal enemy, with as firm a purpose of my

[1] See Note 13.

destruction as ever butcher had of slaying the beast which he drove to the shambles.'

'I will challenge him on that quarrel, since they say he is a fighting blade, though he looks somewhat unwieldy,' said Le Balafré. 'I doubt not but the Duke of Burgundy is so much a friend to men of the sword, that he will allow us a fair field within some reasonable space; and if your Majesty live so long, and enjoy so much freedom, you shall behold me do battle in your right, and take as proper a vengeance on this philosopher as your heart could desire.'

'I commend your bravery and your devotion to my service,' said the King. 'But this treacherous villain is a stout man-at-arms, and I would not willingly risk thy life, my brave soldier.'

'I were no brave soldier, if it please your Majesty,' said Balafré, 'if I dare not face a better man than he. A fine thing it would be for me, who can neither read nor write, to be afraid of a fat lurdane, who has done little else all his life!'

'Nevertheless,' said the King, 'it is not our pleasure so to put thee in venture, Balafré. This traitor comes hither, summoned by our command. We would have thee, so soon as thou canst find occasion, close up with him, and smite him under the fifth rib. Dost thou understand me?'

'Truly, I do,' answered Le Balafré; 'but, if it please your Majesty, this is a matter entirely out of my course of practice. I could not kill you a dog, unless it were in hot assault, or pursuit, or upon defiance given, or such like.'

'Why sure *thou* dost not pretend to tenderness of

heart?' said the King; 'thou who hast been first in storm and siege, and most eager, as men tell me, on the pleasures and advantages which are gained on such occasions by the rough heart and the bloody hand?'

'My lord,' answered Le Balafré, 'I have neither feared nor spared your enemies, sword in hand. And an assault is a desperate matter, under risks which raise a man's blood so, that, by St. Andrew, it will not settle for an hour or two, which I call a fair license for plundering after a storm. And God pity us poor soldiers, who are first driven mad with danger, and then madder with victory. I have heard of a legion consisting entirely of saints; and methinks it would take them all to pray and intercede for the rest of the army, and for all who wear plumes and corslets, buff-coats and broadswords. But what your Majesty purposes is out of my course of practice, though I will never deny that it has been wide enough. As for the astrologer, if he be a traitor, let him e'en die a traitor's death. I will neither meddle nor make with it. Your Majesty has your provost and two of his marshals-men without, who are more fit for dealing with him than a Scottish gentleman of my family and standing in the service.'

'You say well,' said the King; 'but, at least, it belongs to thy duty to prevent interruptions, and to guard the execution of my most just sentence.'

'I will do so against all Péronne,' said Le Balafré. 'Your Majesty need not doubt my fealty in that which I can reconcile to my conscience, which, for mine own convenience and the service of your royal Majesty, I can vouch to be a pretty large one — at least, I know I have done some deeds for your Majesty, which I would

rather have eaten a handful of my own dagger than I would have done for any else.'

'Let that rest,' said the King; 'and hear you; when Galeotti is admitted, and the door shut on him, do you stand to your weapon, and guard the entrance on the inside of the apartment. Let no one intrude; that is all I require of you. Go hence, and send the provost-marshal to me.'

Balafré left the apartment accordingly, and in a minute afterwards Tristan l'Hermite entered from the hall.

'Welcome, gossip,' said the King; 'what thinkest thou of our situation?'

'As of men sentenced to death,' said the provost-marshal, 'unless there come a reprieve from the Duke.'

'Reprieved or not, he that decoyed us into this snare shall go our *fourrier* to the next world, to take up lodgings for us,' said the King, with a grisly and ferocious smile. 'Tristan, thou hast done many an act of brave justice: *finis* — I should have said *funis* — *coronat opus*. Thou must stand by me to the end.'

'I will, my liege,' said Tristan; 'I am but a plain fellow, but I am grateful. I will do my duty within these walls, or elsewhere; and while I live, your Majesty's breath shall pour as potential a note of condemnation, and your sentence be as literally executed, as when you sat on your own throne. They may deal with me the next hour for it if they will, I care not.'

'It is even what I expected of thee, my loving gossip,' said Louis; 'but hast thou good assistance? The traitor is strong and able-bodied, and will doubtless be clamorous for aid. The Scot will do nought but keep the door;

and well that he can be brought to that by flattery and humouring. Then Oliver is good for nothing but lying, flattering, and suggesting dangerous counsels; and, *Ventre Saint-dieu!* I think is more like one day to deserve the halter himself than to use it to another. Have you men, think you, and means, to make sharp and sure work?'

'I have Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André with me,' said he; 'men so expert in their office that out of three men they would hang up one ere his two companions were aware. And we have all resolved to live or die with your Majesty, knowing we shall have as short breath to draw when you are gone as ever fell to the lot of any of our patients. But what is to be our present subject, an it please your Majesty? I love to be sure of my man; for, as your Majesty is pleased sometimes to remind me, I have now and then mistaken the criminal, and strung up in his place an honest labourer, who had given your Majesty no offence.'

'Most true,' said the other. 'Know then, Tristan, that the condemned person is Martius Galeotti. You start, but it is even as I say. The villain hath trained us all hither by false and treacherous representations, that he might put us into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy without defence.'

'But not without vengeance!' said Tristan; 'were it the last act of my life, I would sting him home like an expiring wasp, should I be crushed to pieces on the next instant!'

'I know thy trusty spirit,' said the King, 'and the pleasure which, like other good men, thou dost find in the discharge of thy duty, since virtue, as the school-

men say, is its own reward. But away, and prepare the priests, for the victim approaches.'

'Would you have it done in your own presence, my gracious liege?' said Tristan.

Louis declined this offer; but charged the provost-marshal to have everything ready for the punctual execution of his commands the moment the astrologer left his apartment; 'for,' said the King, 'I will see the villain once more, just to observe how he bears himself towards the master whom he has led into the toils. I shall love to see the sense of approaching death strike the colour from that ruddy cheek, and dim that eye which laughed as it lied. O, that there were but another with him, whose counsels aided his prognostications! But if I survive this — look to your scarlet, my Lord Cardinal! for Rome shall scarce protect you — be it spoken under favour of St. Peter and the blessed Lady of Cléry, who is all over mercy. Why do you tarry? Go get your grooms ready. I expect the villain instantly. I pray to Heaven he take not fear and come not! that were indeed a baulk. Begone, Tristan; thou wert not wont to be so slow when business was to be done.'

'On the contrary, an it like your Majesty, you were ever wont to say that I was too fast, and mistook your purpose, and did the job on the wrong subject. Now, please your Majesty to give me a sign, just when you part with Galeotti for the night, whether the business goes on or no. I have known your Majesty once or twice change your mind, and blame me for over-despatch.'[1]

'Thou suspicious creature,' answered King Louis, 'I tell thee I will *not* change my mind. But to silence thy

[1] See Note 14.

remonstrances, observe, if I say to the knave at parting, "There is a Heaven above us!" then let the business go on; but if I say, "Go in peace," you will understand that my purpose is altered.'

'My head is somewhat of the dullest out of my own department,' said Tristan l'Hermite. 'Stay, let me rehearse. If you bid him depart in peace, I am to have him dealt upon?'

'No, no — idiot, no!' said the King; 'in that case you let him pass free. But if I say, "*There is a Heaven above us!*" up with him a yard or two nearer the planets he is so conversant with.'

'I wish we may have the means here,' said the provost.

'Then *up* with him or *down* with him, it matters not which,' answered the King, grimly smiling.

'And the body,' said the provost, 'how shall we dispose of it?'

'Let me see an instant,' said the King; 'the windows of the hall are too narrow; but that projecting oriel is wide enough. We will over with him into the Somme, and put a paper on his breast, with the legend, "Let the justice of the King pass toll-free." The Duke's officers may seize it for duties if they dare.'

The provost-marshal left the apartment of Louis, and summoned his two assistants to council in an embrasure in the great hall, where Trois-Eschelles stuck a torch against the wall to give them light. They discoursed in whispers, little noticed by Oliver le Dain, who seemed sunk in dejection, and Le Balafré, who was fast asleep.

'Comrades,' said the provost to his executioners, 'perhaps you have thought that our vocation was over,

or that, at least, we were more likely to be the subjects of the duty of others than to have any more to discharge on our own parts. But courage, my mates! our gracious master has reserved for us one noble cast of our office, and it must be gallantly executed, as by men who would live in history.'

'Ay, I guess how it is,' said Trois-Eschelles; 'our patron is like the old kaisers of Rome, who, when things came to an extremity, or, as we would say, to the ladder-foot with them, were wont to select from their own ministers of justice some experienced person, who might spare their sacred persons from the awkward attempts of a novice or blunderer in our mystery. It was a pretty custom for ethnics; but, as a good catholic, I should make some scruple at laying hands on the Most Christian King.'

'Nay, but brother, you are ever too scrupulous,' said Petit-André. 'If he issues word and warrant for his own execution, I see not how we can in duty dispute it. He that dwells at Rome must obey the Pope: the marshals-men must do their master's bidding, and he the King's.'

'Hush, you knaves!' said the provost-marshal, 'there is here no purpose concerning the King's person, but only that of the Greek heretic pagan and Mahomedan wizard, Martius Galeotti.'

'Galeotti!' answered Petit-André; 'that comes quite natural. I never knew one of these legerdemain fellows, who pass their life, as one may say, in dancing upon a tight-rope, but what they came at length to caper at the end of one — tchick!'

'My only concern is,' said Trois-Eschelles, looking

upwards, 'that the poor creature must die without confession.'

'Tush! tush!' said the provost-marshal, in reply, 'he is a rank heretic and necromancer: a whole college of priests could not absolve him from the doom he has deserved. Besides, if he hath a fancy that way, thou hast a gift, Trois-Eschelles, to serve him for ghostly father thyself. But, what is more material, I fear you must use your poniards, my mates; for you have not here the fitting conveniences for the exercise of your profession.'

'Now, our Lady of the Isle of Paris forbid,' said Trois-Eschelles, 'that the King's command should find me destitute of my tools! I always wear around my body St. Francis's cord, doubled four times, with a handsome loop at the farther end of it; for I am of the company of St. Francis, and may wear his cowl when I am *in extremis*, I thank God and the good fathers of Saumur.'

'And for me,' said Petit-André, 'I have always in my budget a handy block and sheaf, or a pulley as they call it, with a strong screw for securing it where I list, in case we should travel where trees are scarce, or high-branched from the ground. I have found it a great convenience.'

'That will suit as well,' said the provost-marshal; 'you have but to screw your pulley into yonder beam above the door, and pass the rope over it. I will keep the fellow in some conversation near the spot until you adjust the noose under his chin, and then —'

'And then we run up the rope,' said Petit-André, 'and tchick! our astrologer is so far in Heaven that he hath not a foot on earth.'

'But these gentlemen,' said Trois-Eschelles, looking

towards the chimney, 'do not these help, and so take a handsel of our vocation?'

'Hem, no,' answered the provost; 'the barber only contrives mischief, which he leaves other men to execute; and for the Scot, he keeps the door when the deed is a-doing, which he hath not spirit or quickness sufficient to partake in more actively; every one to his trade.'

With infinite dexterity, and even a sort of professional delight, which sweetened the sense of their own precarious situation, the worthy executioners of the provost's mandates adapted their rope and pulley for putting in force the sentence which had been uttered against Galeotti by the captive monarch, seeming to rejoice that that last action was to be one so consistent with their past life. Tristan l'Hermite [1] sat eyeing their proceedings with a species of satisfaction; while Oliver paid no attention to them whatever; and Ludovic Lesly, if, awaked by the bustle, he looked upon them at all, considered them as engaged in matters entirely unconnected with his own duty, and for which he was not to be regarded as responsible in one way or other.

[1] See Note 15.

CHAPTER XXIX

RECRIMINATION

Thy time is not yet out: the devil thou servest
Has not as yet deserted thee. He aids
The friends who drudge for him, as the blind man
Was aided by the guide, who lent his shoulder
O'er rough and smooth, until he reach'd the brink
Of the fell precipice, then hurl'd him downward.

Old Play.

WHEN obeying the command, or rather the request, of Louis, for he was in circumstances in which, though a monarch, he could only *request* Le Glorieux to go in search of Martius Galeotti, the jester had no trouble in executing his commission, betaking himself at once to the best tavern in Péronne, of which he himself was rather more than an occasional frequenter, being a great admirer of that species of liquor which reduced all other men's brains to a level with his own.

He found, or rather observed, the astrologer in the corner of the public drinking-room — 'stove,' as it is called in German and Flemish, from its principal furniture — sitting in close colloquy with a female in a singular, and something like a Moorish or Asiatic garb, who, as Le Glorieux approached Martius, rose as in the act to depart.

'These,' said the stranger, 'are news on which you may rely with absolute certainty'; and with that disappeared among the crowd of guests who sat grouped at different tables in the apartment.

'Cousin philosopher,' said the jester, presenting himself, 'Heaven no sooner relieves one sentinel than it sends another to supply the place. One fool being gone, here I come another, to guide you to the apartments of Louis of France.'

'And art thou the messenger?' said Martius, gazing on him with prompt apprehension, and discovering at once the jester's quality, though less intimated, as we have before noticed, than was usual by his external appearance.

'Ay, sir, and like your learning,' answered Le Glorieux; 'when power sends folly to entreat the approach of wisdom, 't is a sure sign what foot the patient halts upon.'

'How if I refuse to come, when summoned at so late an hour by such a messenger?' said Galeotti.

'In that case we will consult your ease, and carry you,' said Le Glorieux. 'Here are half a score of stout Burgundian yeomen at the door, with whom he of Crèvecœur has furnished me to that effect. For know that my friend Charles of Burgundy and I have not taken away our kinsman Louis's crown, which he was ass enough to put into our power, but have only filed and clipt it a little; and, though reduced to the size of a spangle, it is still pure gold. In plain terms, he is still paramount over his own people, yourself included, and Most Christian King of the old dining-hall in the Castle of Péronne, to which you, as his liege subject, are presently obliged to repair.'

'I attend you, sir,' said Martius Galeotti, and accompanied Le Glorieux accordingly, seeing, perhaps, that no evasion was possible.

'Ay, sir,' said the fool as they went towards the castle, 'you do well; for we treat our kinsman as men use an old famished lion in his cage, and thrust him now and then a calf to mumble, to keep his old jaws in exercise.'

'Do you mean,' said Martius, 'that the King intends me bodily injury?'

'Nay, that you can guess better than I,' said the jester; 'for though the night be cloudy, I warrant you can see the stars through the mist. I know nothing of the matter, not I; only my mother always told me to go warily near an old rat in a trap, for he was never so much disposed to bite.'

The astrologer asked no more questions; and Le Glorieux, according to the custom of those of his class, continued to run on in a wild and disordered strain of sarcasm and folly mingled together, until he delivered the philosopher to the guard at the castle gate of Péronne where he was passed from warder to warder, and at length admitted within Herbert's Tower.

The hints of the jester had not been lost on Martius Galeotti, and he saw something which seemed to confirm them in the look and manner of Tristan, whose mode of addressing him, as he marshalled him to the King's bedchamber, was lowering, sullen, and ominous. A close observer of what passed on earth, as well as among the heavenly bodies, the pulley and the rope also caught the astrologer's eye; and as the latter was in a state of vibration, he concluded that some one who had been busy adjusting it had been interrupted in the work by his sudden arrival. All this he saw, and summoned together his subtilty to evade the impending

danger, resolved, should he find that impossible, to defend himself to the last against whomsoever should assail him.

Thus resolved, and with a step and look corresponding to the determination he had taken, Martius presented himself before Louis, alike unabashed at the miscarriage of his predictions, and undismayed at the monarch's anger and its probable consequences.

'Every good planet be gracious to your Majesty!' said Galeotti, with an inclination almost Oriental in manner. 'Every evil constellation withhold their influences from my royal master!'

'Methinks,' replied the King, 'that when you look around this apartment, when you think where it is situated, and how guarded, your wisdom might consider that my propitious stars had proved faithless, and that each evil conjunction had already done its worst. Art thou not ashamed, Martius Galeotti, to see me here and a prisoner, when you recollect by what assurances I was lured hither?'

'And art *thou* not ashamed, my royal sire?' replied the philosopher, 'thou whose step in science was so forward, thy apprehension so quick, thy perseverance so unceasing, — art thou not ashamed to turn from the first frown of fortune, like a craven from the first clash of arms? Didst thou proprose to become participant of those mysteries which raise men above the passions, the mischances, the pains, the sorrows of life, a state only to be attained by rivalling the firmness of the ancient Stoic; and dost thou shrink from the first pressure of adversity, and forfeit the glorious prize for which thou didst start as a competitor, frightened out

of the course, like a scared racer, by shadowy and unreal evils?'

'Shadowy and unreal! frontless as thou art!' exclaimed the King, 'is this dungeon unreal? the weapons of the guards of my detested enemy Burgundy, which you may hear clash at the gate, are those shadows? What, traitor, *are* real evils, if imprisonment, dethronement, and danger of life are not so?'

'Ignorance — ignorance, my brother, and prejudice,' answered the sage with great firmness, 'are the only real evils. Believe me, that kings in the plenitude of power, if immersed in ignorance and prejudice, are less free than sages in a dungeon and loaded with material chains. Towards this true happiness it is mine to guide you; be it yours to attend to my instructions.'

'And it is to such philosophical freedom that your lessons would have guided me?' said the King, very bitterly. 'I would you had told me at Plessis that the dominion promised me so liberally was an empire over my own passions; that the success of which I was assured related to my progress in philosophy; and that I might become as wise and as learned as a strolling mountebank of Italy! I might surely have attained this mental ascendency at a more moderate price than that of forfeiting the fairest crown in Christendom and becoming tenant of a dungeon in Péronne! Go, sir, and think not to escape condign punishment. *There is a Heaven above us!*'

'I leave you not to your fate,' replied Martius, 'until I have vindicated, even in your eyes, darkened as they are, that reputation, a brighter gem than the brightest in thy crown, and at which the world shall wonder ages

after all the race of Capet are mouldered into oblivion in the charnels of St. Denis.'

'Speak on,' said Louis; 'thine impudence cannot make me change my purposes or my opinion. Yet as I may never again pass judgment as a king, I will not censure thee unheard. Speak, then, though the best thou canst say will be to speak the truth. Confess that I am a dupe, thou an impostor, thy pretended science a dream, and the planets which shine above us as little influential of our destiny as their shadows, when reflected in the river, are capable of altering its course.'

'And how know'st thou,' answered the astrologer, boldly, 'the secret influence of yonder blessed lights? Speak'st thou of their inability to influence waters, when yet thou know'st that even the weakest, the moon herself, — weakest because nearest to this wretched earth of ours, — holds under her domination, not such poor streams as the Somme, but the tides of the mighty ocean itself, which ebb and increase as her disk waxes and wanes, and watch her influence as a slave waits the nod of a sultana? And now, Louis of Valois, answer my parable in turn. Confess, art thou not like the foolish passenger, who becomes wroth with his pilot because he cannot bring the vessel into harbour without experiencing occasionally the adverse force of winds and currents? I could indeed point to thee the probable issue of thine enterprise as prosperous, but it was in the power of Heaven alone to conduct thee thither; and if the path be rough and dangerous, was it in my power to smooth or render it more safe? Where is thy wisdom of yesterday, which taught thee so truly to discern that the ways

of destiny are often ruled to our advantage, though in opposition to our wishes?'

'You remind me — you remind me,' said the King, hastily, 'of one specific falsehood. You foretold yonder Scot should accomplish his enterprise fortunately for my interest and honour; and thou knowest it has so terminated that no more mortal injury could I have received than from the impression which the issue of that affair is like to make on the excited brain of the Mad Bull of Burgundy. This is a direct falsehood. Thou canst plead no evasion here, canst refer to no remote favourable turn of the tide, for which, like an idiot sitting on the bank until the river shall pass away, thou wouldst have me wait contentedly. Here thy craft deceived thee. Thou wert weak enough to make a specific prediction, which has proved directly false.'

'Which will prove most firm and true,' answered the astrologer, boldly. 'I would desire no greater triumph of art over ignorance than that prediction and its accomplishment will afford. I told thee he would be faithful in any honourable commission. Hath he not been so? I told thee he would be scrupulous in aiding any evil enterprise. Hath he not proved so? If you doubt it, go ask the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin.'

The King here coloured deeply with shame and anger.

'I told thee,' continued the astrologer, 'that the conjunction of planets under which he set forth augured danger to the person; and hath not his path been beset by danger? I told thee that it augured an advantage to the sender, and of that thou wilt soon have the benefit.'

'Soon have the benefit!' exclaimed the King; 'have

I not the result already, in disgrace and imprisonment?'

'No,' answered the astrologer, 'the end is not as yet; thine own tongue shall ere long confess the benefit which thou hast received, from the manner in which the messenger bore himself in discharging thy commission.'

'This is too — too insolent,' said the King, 'at once to deceive and to insult — But hence! think not my wrongs shall be unavenged. *There is a Heaven above us!*'

Galeotti turned to depart. 'Yet stop,' said Louis; 'thou bearest thine imposture bravely out. Let me hear your answer to one question, and think ere you speak. Can thy pretended skill ascertain the hour of thine own death?'

'Only by referring to the fate of another,' said Galeotti.

'I understand not thine answer,' said Louis.

'Know then, O king,' said Martius, 'that this only I can tell with certainty concerning mine own death, that it shall take place exactly twenty-four hours before that of your Majesty.'[1]

'Ha! say'st thou?' said Louis, his countenance again altering. 'Hold — hold — go not — wait one moment. Saidst thou, *my* death should follow *thine* so closely?'

'Within the space of twenty-four hours,' repeated Galeotti, firmly, 'if there be one sparkle of true divination in those bright and mysterious intelligences, which speak, each on their courses, though without a tongue. I wish your Majesty good rest.'

'Hold — hold — go not,' said the King, taking him by the arm and leading him from the door. 'Martius

[1] See Note 16.

Galeotti, I have been a kind master to thee — enriched thee — made thee my friend — my companion — the instructor of my studies. Be open with me, I entreat you. Is there aught in this art of yours in very deed? Shall this Scot's mission be, in fact, propitious to me? And is the measure of our lives so very — *very* nearly matched? Confess, my good Martius, you speak after the trick of your trade. Confess, I pray you, and you shall have no displeasure at my hand. I am in years — a prisoner — likely to be deprived of a kingdom; to one in my condition truth is worth kingdoms, and it is from thee, dearest Martius, that I must look for this inestimable jewel.'

'And I have laid it before your Majesty,' said Galeotti, 'at the risk that, in brutal passion, you might turn upon me and rend me.'

'Who, I, Galeotti?' replied Louis, mildly. 'Alas! thou mistakest me! Am I not captive, and should not I be patient, especially since my anger can only show my impotence? Tell me then in sincerity, have you fooled me, or is your science true, and do you truly report it?'

'Your Majesty will forgive me if I reply to you,' said Martius Galeotti, 'that time only — time and the event — will convince incredulity. It suits ill the place of confidence which I have held at the council-table of the renowned conqueror, Matthias Corvinus of Hungary — nay, in the cabinet of the Emperor himself — to reiterate assurances of that which I have advanced as true. If you will not believe me, I can but refer to the course of events. A day or two days' patience will prove or disprove what I have averred concerning the young

Scot; and I will be contented to die on the wheel, and have my limbs broken joint by joint, if your Majesty have not advantage, and that in a most important degree, from the dauntless conduct of that Quentin Durward. But if I were to die under such tortures, it would be well your Majesty should seek a ghostly father; for from the moment my last groan is drawn only twenty-four hours will remain to you for confession and penitence.'

Louis continued to keep hold of Galeotti's robe as he led him towards the door, and pronounced as he opened it, in a loud voice, 'To-morrow we'll talk more of this. Go in peace, my learned father — *go in peace* — *go in peace!*'

He repeated these words three times; and, still afraid that the provost-marshal might mistake his purpose, he led the astrologer into the hall, holding fast his robe, as if afraid that he should be torn from him and put to death before his eyes. He did not unloose his grasp until he had not only repeated again and again the gracious phrase, 'Go in peace,' but even made a private signal to the provost-marshal, to enjoin a suspension of all proceedings against the person of the astrologer.

Thus did the possession of some secret information, joined to audacious courage and readiness of wit, save Galeotti from the most imminent danger; and thus was Louis, the most sagacious as well as the most vindictive amongst the monarchs of the period, cheated of his revenge by the influence of superstition upon a selfish temper, and a mind to which, from the consciousness of many crimes, the fear of death was peculiarly terrible.

He felt, however, considerable mortification at being obliged to relinquish his purposed vengeance; and the

disappointment seemed to be shared by his satellites, to whom the execution was to have been committed. Le Balafré alone, perfectly indifferent on the subject, so soon as the countermanding signal was given, left the door at which he had posted himself, and in a few minutes was fast asleep.

The provost-marshal, as the group reclined themselves to repose in the hall after the King retired to his bedchamber, continued to eye the goodly form of the astrologer, with the look of the mastiff watching a joint of meat which the cook had retrieved from his jaws, while his attendants communicated to each other in brief sentences their characteristic sentiments.

'The poor blinded necromancer,' whispered Trois-Eschelles, with an air of spiritual unction and commiseration, to his comrade, Petit-André, 'hath lost the fairest chance of expiating some of his vile sorceries, by dying through means of the cord of the blessed St. Francis! and I had purpose, indeed, to leave the comfortable noose around his neck, to scare the foul fiend from his unhappy carcass.'

'And I,' said Petit-André, 'have missed the rarest opportunity of knowing how far a weight of seventeen stone will stretch a three-plied cord! It would have been a glorious experiment in our line, and the jolly old boy would have died so easily!'

While this whispered dialogue was going forward, Martius, who had taken the opposite side of the huge stone fireplace, round which the whole group was assembled, regarded them askance and with a look of suspicion. He first put his hand into his vest, and satisfied himself that the handle of a very sharp double-edged

poniard, which he always carried about him, was disposed conveniently for his grasp; for, as we have already noticed, he was, though now somewhat unwieldy, a powerful, athletic man, and prompt and active at the use of his weapon. Satisfied that this trusty instrument was in readiness, he next took from his bosom a scroll of parchment, inscribed with Greek characters and marked with cabalistic signs, drew together the wood in the fireplace, and made a blaze by which he could distinguish the features and attitude of all who sat or lay around: the heavy and deep slumbers of the Scottish soldier, who lay motionless, with his rough countenance as immovable as if it were cast in bronze; the pale and anxious face of Oliver, who at one time assumed the appearance of slumber, and again opened his eyes and raised his head hastily, as if stung by some internal throe, or awakened by some distant sound; the discontented, savage, bulldog aspect of the provost, who looked

> Frustrate of his will,
> Not half sufficed, and greedy yet to kill;

while the background was filled up by the ghastly hypocritical countenance of Trois-Eschelles, whose eyes were cast up towards Heaven, as if he was internally saying his devotions; and the grim drollery of Petit-André, who amused himself with mimicking the gestures and wry faces of his comrade before he betook himself to sleep.

Amidst these vulgar and ignoble countenances, nothing could show to greater advantage than the stately form, handsome mien, and commanding features of the astrologer, who might have passed for one of the ancient magi, imprisoned in a den of robbers, and about to in-

voke a spirit to accomplish his liberation. And, indeed, had he been distinguished by nothing else than the beauty of the graceful and flowing beard which descended over the mysterious roll which he held in his hand, one might have been pardoned for regretting that so noble an appendage had been bestowed on one who put both talents, learning, and the advantages of eloquence, and a majestic person, to the mean purposes of a cheat and an impostor.

Thus passed the night in Count Herbert's Tower, in the Castle of Péronne. When the first light of dawn penetrated the ancient Gothic chamber, the King summoned Oliver to his presence, who found the monarch sitting in his nightgown, and was astonished at the alteration which one night of mortal anxiety had made in his looks. He would have expressed some anxiety on the subject, but the King silenced him by entering into a statement of the various modes by which he had previously endeavoured to form friends at the court of Burgundy, and which Oliver was charged to prosecute so soon as he should be permitted to stir abroad. And never was that wily minister more struck with the clearness of the King's intellect, and his intimate knowledge of all the springs which influence human actions, than he was during that memorable consultation.

About two hours afterwards, Oliver accordingly obtained permission from the Count of Crèvecœur to go out and execute the commissions which his master had entrusted him with; and Louis, sending for the astrologer, in whom he seemed to have renewed his faith, held with him, in like manner, a long consultation, the issue of which appeared to give him more spirits and confidence

than he had at first exhibited; so that he dressed himself, and received the morning compliments of Crèvecœur with a calmness at which the Burgundian lord could not help wondering, the rather that he had already heard that the Duke had passed several hours in a state of mind which seemed to render the King's safety very precarious.

CHAPTER XXX

UNCERTAINTY

Our counsels waver like the unsteady bark,
That reels amid the strife of meeting currents.

Old Play.

If the night passed by Louis was carefully anxious and agitated, that spent by the Duke of Burgundy, who had at no time the same mastery over his passions, and, indeed, who permitted them almost a free and uncontrolled dominion over his actions, was still more disturbed.

According to the custom of the period, two of his principal and most favoured counsellors, D'Hymbercourt and Des Comines, shared his bedchamber, couches being prepared for them near the bed of the prince. Their attendance was never more necessary than upon this night, when, distracted by sorrow, by passion, by the desire of revenge, and by the sense of honour, which forbade him to exercise it upon Louis in his present condition, the Duke's mind resembled a volcano in eruption, which throws forth all the different contents of the mountain, mingled and molten into one burning mass.

He refused to throw off his clothes, or to make any preparation for sleep; but spent the night in a succession of the most violent bursts of passion. In some paroxysms he talked incessantly to his attendants so thick and so rapidly, that they were really afraid his senses would give way; choosing for his theme the merits and the kind-

ness of heart of the murdered Bishop of Liege, and recalling all the instances of mutual kindness, affection, and confidence which had passed between them, until he had worked himself into such a transport of grief that he threw himself upon his face in the bed, and seemed ready to choke with the sobs and tears which he endeavoured to stifle. Then starting from the couch, he gave vent at once to another and more furious mood, and traversed the room hastily, uttering incoherent threats, and still more incoherent oaths of vengeance, while, stamping with his foot, according to his customary action, he invoked St. George, St. Andrew, and whomsoever else he held most holy, to bear witness that he would take bloody vengeance on De la Marck, on the people of Liege, and on *him* who was the author of the whole. These last threats, uttered more obscurely than the others, obviously concerned the person of the King; and at one time the Duke expressed his determination to send for the Duke of Normandy, the brother of the King, and with whom Louis was on the worst terms, in order to compel the captive monarch to surrender either the crown itself, or some of its most valuable rights and appanages.

Another day and night passed in the same stormy and fitful deliberations, or rather rapid transitions of passion; for the Duke scarcely ate or drank, never changed his dress, and, altogether, demeaned himself like one in whom rage might terminate in utter insanity. By degrees he became more composed, and began to hold, from time to time, consultations with his ministers, in which much was proposed, but nothing resolved on. Comines assures us that at one time a courier was mounted in readiness

to depart for the purpose of summoning the Duke of Normandy; and in that event the prison of the French monarch would probably have been found, as in similar cases, a brief road to his grave.

At other times, when Charles had exhausted his fury, he sat with his features fixed in stern and rigid immobility, like one who broods over some desperate deed to which he is as yet unable to work up his resolution. And unquestionably it would have needed little more than an insidious hint from any of the counsellors who attended his person, to have pushed the Duke to some very desperate action. But the nobles of Burgundy, from the sacred character attached to the person of a king and a lord paramount, and from a regard to the public faith, as well as that of their Duke, which had been pledged when Louis threw himself into their power, were almost unanimously inclined to recommend moderate measures; and the arguments which D'Hymbercourt and Des Comines had now and then ventured to insinuate during the night were, in the cooler hours of the next morning, advanced and urged by Crèvecœur and others. Possibly their zeal in behalf of the King might not be entirely disinterested. Many, as we have mentioned, had already experienced the bounty of the King; others had either estates or pretensions in France, which placed them a little under his influence; and it is certain that the treasure, which had loaded four mules when the King entered Péronne, became much lighter in the course of these negotiations.

In the course of the third day the Count of Campobasso brought his Italian wit to assist the counsels of Charles; and well was it for Louis that he had not ar-

rived when the Duke was in his first fury. Immediately on his arrival, a regular meeting of the Duke's counsellors was convened, for considering the measures to be adopted in this singular crisis.

On this occasion Campo-basso gave his opinion couched in the apologue of the traveller, the adder, and the fox; and reminded the Duke of the advice which Reynard gave to the man, that he should crush his mortal enemy, now that chance had placed his fate at his disposal. Des Comines, who saw the Duke's eyes sparkle at a proposal which his own violence of temper had already repeatedly suggested, hastened to state the possibility that Louis might not be, in fact, so directly accessory to the sanguinary action which had been committed at Schonwaldt; that he might be able to clear himself of the imputation laid to his charge, and perhaps to make other atonement for the distractions which his intrigues had occasioned in the Duke's dominions, and those of his allies; and that an act of violence perpetrated on the King was sure to bring both on France and Burgundy a train of the most unhappy consequences, among which not the least to be feared was, that the English might avail themselves of the commotions and civil discord which must needs ensue to repossess themselves of Normandy and Guyenne, and renew those dreadful wars, which had only, and with difficulty, been terminated by the union of both France and Burgundy against the common enemy. Finally, he confessed, that he did not mean to urge the absolute and free dismissal of Louis; but only that the Duke should avail himself no further of his present condition than merely to establish a fair and equitable treaty between the countries, with such

security on the King's part as should make it difficult for him to break his faith, or disturb the internal peace of Burgundy in future. D'Hymbercourt, Crèvecœur, and others signified their reprobation of the violent measures proposed by Campo-basso, and their opinion that in the way of treaty more permanent advantages could be obtained, and in a manner more honourable for Burgundy, than by an action which would stain her with a breach of faith and hospitality.

The Duke listened to these arguments with his looks fixed on the ground, and his brows so knitted together as to bring his bushy eyebrows into one mass. But when Crèvecœur proceeded to say that he did not believe Louis either knew of, or was accessary to, the atrocious act of violence committed at Schonwaldt, Charles raised his head, and darting a fierce look at his counsellor, exclaimed, 'Have you too, Crèvecœur, heard the gold of France clink? Methinks it rings in my councils as merrily as ever the bells of St. Denis. Dare any one say that Louis is not the fomenter of these feuds in Flanders?'

'My gracious lord,' said Crèvecœur, 'my hand has ever been more conversant with steel than with gold; and so far am I from holding that Louis is free from the charge of having caused the disturbances in Flanders, that it is not long since, in the face of his whole court, I charged him with that breach of faith, and offered him defiance in your name. But although his intrigues have been doubtless the original cause of these commotions, I am so far from believing that he authorised the death of the archbishop, that I believe one of his emissaries publicly protested against it; and

I could produce the man, were it your Grace's pleasure to see him.'

'It *is* our pleasure,' said the Duke. 'St. George! can you doubt that we desire to act justly? Even in the highest flight of our passion we are known for an upright and a just judge. We will see France ourself; we will ourself charge him with our wrongs, and ourself state to him the reparation which we expect and demand. If he shall be found guiltless of this murder, the atonement for other crimes may be more easy. If he hath been guilty, who shall say that a life of penitence in some retired monastery were not a most deserved and a most merciful doom? Who,' he added, kindling as he spoke — 'who shall dare to blame a revenge yet more direct and more speedy? Let your witness attend. We will to the castle at the hour before noon. Some articles we will minute down with which he shall comply, or woe on his head! others shall depend upon the proof. Break up the council and dismiss yourselves. I will but change my dress, as this is scarce a fitting trim in which to wait on *my most gracious sovereign*.'

With a deep and bitter emphasis on the last expression, the Duke arose, and strode out of the room.

'Louis's safety, and, what is worse, the honour of Burgundy, depend on a cast of the dice,' said D'Hymbercourt to Crèvecœur and to Des Comines. 'Haste thee to the castle, Des Comines; thou hast a better filed tongue than either Crèvecœur or I. Explain to Louis what storm is approaching; he will best know how to pilot himself. I trust this Life Guardsman will say nothing which can aggravate; for who knows what may have been the secret commission with which he was charged?'

'The young man,' said Crèvecœur, 'seems bold, yet prudent and wary far beyond his years. In all which he said to me he was tender of the King's character, as of that of the prince whom he serves. I trust he will be equally so in the Duke's presence. I must go seek him, and also the young Countess of Croye.'

'The countess! You told us you had left her at St. Bridget's nunnery?'

'Ay, but I was obliged,' said the count, 'to send for her express, by the Duke's orders; and she has been brought hither on a litter, as being unable to travel otherwise. She was in a state of the deepest distress, both on account of the uncertainty of the fate of her kinswoman, the Lady Hameline, and the gloom which overhangs her own, guilty as she has been of a feudal delinquency, in withdrawing herself from the protection of her liege lord, Duke Charles, who is not the person in the world most likely to view with indifference what trenches on his seignorial rights.'

The information that the young countess was in the hands of Charles added fresh and more pointed thorns to Louis's reflections. He was conscious that, by explaining the intrigues by which he had induced the Lady Hameline and her to resort to Péronne, she might supply that evidence which he had removed by the execution of Zamet Maugrabin; and he knew well how much such proof of his having interfered with the rights of the Duke of Burgundy would furnish both motive and pretext for Charles's availing himself to the uttermost of his present predicament.

Louis discoursed on these matters with great anxiety to the Sieur des Comines, whose acute and political

talents better suited the King's temper than the blunt, martial character of Crèvecœur or the feudal haughtiness of D'Hymbercourt.

'These iron-handed soldiers, my good friend Comines,' he said to his future historian, 'should never enter a king's cabinet, but be left with the halberds and partisans in the ante-chamber. Their hands are indeed made for our use; but the monarch who puts their heads to any better occupation than that of anvils for his enemies' swords and maces ranks with the fool who presented his mistress with a dog-leash for a carcanet. It is with such as thou, Philip, whose eyes are gifted with the quick and keen sense that sees beyond the exterior surface of affairs, that princes should share their council-table, their cabinet — what do I say? — the most secret recesses of their soul.'

Des Comines, himself so keen a spirit, was naturally gratified with the approbation of the most sagacious prince in Europe; and he could not so far disguise his internal satisfaction but that Louis was aware he had made some impression on him. 'I would,' continued he, 'that I had such a servant, or rather that I were worthy to have such a one! I had not then been in this unfortunate situation; which, nevertheless, I should hardly regret, could I but discover any means of securing the services of so experienced a statist.'

Des Comines said that all his faculties, such as they were, were at the service of his Most Christian Majesty, saving always his allegiance to his rightful lord, Duke Charles of Burgundy.

'And am I one who would seduce you from that alle-

giance?' said Louis, pathetically. 'Alas! am I not now endangered by having reposed too much confidence in my vassal? and can the cause of feudal good faith be more sacred with any than with me, whose safety depends on an appeal to it? No, Philip des Comines, continue to serve Charles of Burgundy; and you will best serve him by bringing round a fair accommodation with Louis of France. In doing thus you will serve us both, and one, at least, will be grateful. I am told your appointments in this court hardly match those of the Grand Falconer; and thus the services of the wisest counsellor in Europe are put on a level, or rather ranked below, those of a fellow who feeds and physics kites! France has wide lands; her King has much gold. Allow me, my friend, to rectify this scandalous inequality. The means are not distant. Permit me to use them.'

The King produced a weighty bag of money; but Des Comines, more delicate in his sentiments than most courtiers of that time, declined the proffer, declaring himself perfectly satisfied with the liberality of his native prince, and assuring Louis that his desire to serve him could not be increased by the acceptance of any such gratuity as he had proposed.

'Singular man!' exclaimed the King; 'let me embrace the only courtier of his time at once capable and incorruptible. Wisdom is to be desired more than fine gold; and believe me, I trust in thy kindness, Philip, at this pinch, more than I do in the purchased assistance of many who have received my gifts. I know you will not counsel your master to abuse such an opportunity as fortune, and, to speak plain, Des Comines, as my own folly, has afforded him.'

'To *abuse* it, by no means,' answered the historian; 'but most certainly to *use* it.'

'How, and in what degree?' said Louis. 'I am not ass enough to expect that I shall escape without some ransom, but let it be a reasonable one; reason I am ever willing to listen to, at Paris or at Plessis, equally as at Péronne.'

'Ah, but if it like your Majesty,' replied Des Comines, 'reason at Paris or Plessis was used to speak in so low and soft a tone of voice, that she could not always gain an audience of your Majesty; at Péronne she borrows the speaking-trumpet of necessity, and her voice becomes lordly and imperative.'

'You are figurative,' said Louis, unable to restrain an emotion of peevishness; 'I am a dull, blunt man, Sir of Comines. I pray you leave your tropes, and come to plain ground. What does your duke expect of me?'

'I am the bearer of no propositions, my lord,' said Des Comines; 'the Duke will soon explain his own pleasure. But some things occur to me as proposals, for which your Majesty ought to hold yourself prepared; as, for example, the final cession of these towns here upon the Somme.'

'I expected so much,' said Louis.

'That you should disown the Liegeois and William de la Marck.'

'As willingly as I disclaim Hell and Satan,' said Louis.

'Ample security will be required, by hostages, or occupation of fortresses, or otherwise, that France shall in future abstain from stirring up rebellion among the Flemings.'

'It is something new,' answered the King, 'that a

vassal should demand pledges from his sovereign; but let that pass too.'

'A suitable and independent appanage for your illustrious brother, the ally and friend of my master — Normandy or Champagne. The Duke loves your father's house, my liege.'

'So well,' answered Louis, 'that, *mort Dieu!* he's about to make them all kings. Is your budget of hints yet emptied?'

'Not entirely,' answered the counsellor: 'it will certainly be required that your Majesty shall forbear molesting, as you have done of late, the Duke de Bretagne, and that you will no longer contest the right which he and other grand feudatories have to strike money, to term themselves dukes and princes by the grace of God —'

'In a word, to make so many kings of my vassals. Sir Philip, would you make a fratricide of me? You remember well my brother Charles: he was no sooner Duke of Guyenne than he died. And what will be left to the descendant and representative of Charlemagne, after giving away these rich provinces, save to be smeared with oil at Rheims, and to eat his dinner under a high canopy?'

'We will diminish your Majesty's concern on that score, by giving you a companion in that solitary exaltation,' said Philip des Comines. 'The Duke of Burgundy, though he claims not at present the title of an independent king, desires nevertheless to be freed in future from the abject marks of subjection required of him to the crown of France; it is his purpose to close his ducal coronet with an imperial arch, and surmount

it with a globe, in emblem that his dominions are independent.'

'And how dares the Duke of Burgundy, the sworn vassal of France,' exclaimed Louis, starting up and showing an unwonted degree of emotion — 'how dares he propose such terms to his sovereign as, by every law of Europe, should infer a forfeiture of his fief?'

'The doom of forfeiture it would in this case be difficult to enforce,' answered Des Comines, calmly. 'Your Majesty is aware that the strict interpretation of the feudal law is becoming obsolete even in the Empire, and that superior and vassal endeavour to mend their situation in regard to each other as they have power and opportunity. Your Majesty's interferences with the Duke's vassals in Flanders will prove an exculpation of my master's conduct, supposing him to insist that, by enlarging his independence, France should in future be debarred from any pretext of doing so.'

'Comines — Comines!' said Louis, arising again and pacing the room in a pensive manner, 'this is a dreadful lesson on the text *væ victis!* You cannot mean that the Duke will insist on all these hard conditions?'

'At least I would have your Majesty be in a condition to discuss them all.'

'Yet moderation, Des Comines — moderation in success is — no one knows better than you — necessary to its ultimate advantage.'

'So please your Majesty, the merit of moderation is, I have observed, most apt to be extolled by the losing party. The winner holds in more esteem the prudence which calls on him not to leave an opportunity unimproved.'

'Well, we will consider,' replied the King; 'but at least thou hast reached the extremity of your duke's unreasonable exaction? There can remain nothing — or if there does, for so thy brow intimates — what is it — what indeed can it be, unless it be my crown, which these previous demands, if granted, will deprive of all its lustre?'

'My lord,' said Des Comines, 'what remains to be mentioned is a thing partly — indeed, in a great measure — within the Duke's own power, though he means to invite your Majesty's accession to it, for in truth it touches you nearly.'

'*Pasques-dieu!*' exclaimed the King impatiently, 'what is it? Speak out, Sir Philip; am I to send him my daughter for a concubine, or what other dishonour is he to put on me?'

'No dishonour, my liege; but your Majesty's cousin, the illustrious Duke of Orleans —'

'Ha!' exclaimed the King; but Des Comines proceeded without heeding the interruption.

' — Having conferred his affections on the young Countess Isabelle de Croye, the Duke expects your Majesty will, on your part, as he on his, yield your assent to the marriage, and unite with him in endowing the right noble couple with such an appanage as, joined to the countess's estates, may form a fit establishment for a child of France.'

'Never — never!' said the King, bursting out into that emotion which he had of late suppressed with much difficulty, and striding about in a disordered haste, which formed the strongest contrast to the self-command which he usually exhibited — 'never — never! Let

them bring scissors and shear my hair like that of the parish fool, whom I have so richly resembled — let them bid the monastery or the grave yawn for me — let them bring red-hot basins to sear my eyes — axe or aconite — whatever they will; but Orleans shall not break his plighted faith to my daughter, or marry another while she lives!'

'Your Majesty,' said Des Comines, 'ere you set your mind so keenly against what is proposed, will consider your own want of power to prevent it. Every wise man, when he sees a rock giving way, withdraws from the bootless attempt of preventing the fall.'

'But a brave man,' said Louis, 'will at least find his grave beneath it. Des Comines, consider the great loss — the utter destruction, such a marriage will bring upon my kingdom. Recollect, I have but one feeble boy, and this Orleans is the next heir; consider that the church hath consented to his union with Joan, which unites so happily the interests of both branches of my family — think on all this, and think too that this union has been the favourite scheme of my whole life — that I have schemed for it, fought for it, watched for it, prayed for it — and sinned for it. Philip des Comines, I will not forego it! Think, man — think! pity me in this extremity; thy quick brain can speedily find some substitute for this sacrifice — some ram to be offered up instead of that project which is dear to me as the Patriarch's only son was to him. Philip, pity me! You, at least, should know that to men of judgment and foresight the destruction of the scheme on which they have long dwelt, and for which they have long toiled, is more inexpressibly bitter than the transient grief of ordinary

men, whose pursuits are but the gratification of some temporary passion — you, who know how to sympathise with the deeper, the more genuine distress of baffled prudence and disappointed sagacity, will you not feel for me?'

'My lord and king!' replied Des Comines, 'I do sympathise with your distress, in so far as duty to my master —'

'Do not mention him!' said Louis, acting, or at least appearing to act, under an irresistible and headlong impulse, which withdrew the usual guard which he maintained over his language. 'Charles of Burgundy is unworthy of your attachment. He who can insult and strike his counsellors — he who can distinguish the wisest and most faithful among them by the opprobrious name of Booted Head —!'

The wisdom of Philip des Comines did not prevent his having a high sense of personal consequence; and he was so much struck with the words which the King uttered, as it were, in the career of a passion which overleaped ceremony, that he could only reply by repetition of the words 'Booted Head! It is impossible that my master the Duke could have so termed the servant who has been at his side since he could mount a palfrey, and that too before a foreign monarch — it is impossible!'

Louis instantly saw the impression he had made, and avoiding alike a tone of condolence, which might have seemed insulting, and one of sympathy, which might have savoured of affectation, he said, with simplicity, and at the same time with dignity, 'My misfortunes made me forget my courtesy, else I had not spoken to you of what it must be unpleasant for you to hear. But you have in

reply taxed me with having uttered impossibilities, this touches my honour; yet I must submit to the charge, if I tell you not the circumstances which the Duke, laughing until his eyes ran over, assigned for the origin of that opprobrious name, which I will not offend your ears by repeating. Thus, then, it chanced. You, Sir Philip des Comines, were at a hunting-match with the Duke of Burgundy, your master; and when he alighted after the chase, he required your services in drawing off his boots. Reading in your looks, perhaps, some natural resentment of this disparaging treatment, he ordered you to sit down in turn, and rendered you the same office he had just received from you. But, offended at your understanding him literally, he no sooner plucked one of your boots off than he brutally beat it about your head till the blood flowed, exclaiming against the insolence of a subject who had the presumption to accept of such a service at the hand of his sovereign; and hence he, or his privileged fool Le Glorieux, is in the current habit of distinguishing you by the absurd and ridiculous name of *Tête-botté*, which makes one of the Duke's most ordinary subjects of pleasantry.' [1]

While Louis thus spoke, he had the double pleasure of galling to the quick the person whom he addressed — an exercise which it was in his nature to enjoy, even where he had not, as in the present case, the apology that he did so in pure retaliation — and that of observing, that he had at length been able to find a point in Des Comines's character which might lead him gradually from the interests of Burgundy to those of France. But although the deep resentment which the offended courtier

[1] See Note 17.

entertained against his master induced him at a future period to exchange the service of Charles for that of Louis, yet, at the present moment, he was contented to throw out only some general hints of his friendly inclination towards France, which he well knew the King would understand how to interpret. And indeed it would be unjust to stigmatise the memory of the excellent historian with the desertion of his master on this occasion, although he was certainly now possessed with sentiments much more favourable to Louis than when he entered the apartment.

He constrained himself to laugh at the anecdote which Louis had detailed, and then added, 'I did not think so trifling a frolic would have dwelt on the mind of the Duke so long as to make it worth telling again. Some such passage there was of drawing off boots and the like, as your Majesty knows that the Duke is fond of rude play; but it has been much exaggerated in his recollection. Let it pass on.'

'Ay, *let* it pass on,' said the King; 'it is indeed shame it should have detained us a minute. And now, Sir Philip, I hope you are French so far as to afford me your best counsel in these difficult affairs. You have, I am well aware, the clue to the labyrinth, if you would but impart it.'

'Your Majesty may command my best advice and service,' replied Des Comines, 'under reservation always of my duty to my own master.'

This was nearly what the courtier had before stated; but he now repeated it in a tone so different, that whereas Louis understood from the former declaration that the reserved duty to Burgundy was the prime thing to be

considered, so he now saw clearly that the emphasis was reversed, and that more weight was now given by the speaker to his promise of counsel than to a restriction which seemed interposed for the sake of form and consistency. The King resumed his own seat, and compelled Des Comines to sit by him, listening at the same time to that statesman, as if the words of an oracle sounded in his ears. Des Comines spoke in that low and impressive tone which implies at once great sincerity and some caution, and at the same time so slowly as if he was desirous that the King should weigh and consider each individual word as having its own peculiar and determined meaning. 'The things,' he said, 'which I have suggested for your Majesty's consideration, harsh as they sound in your ear, are but substitutes for still more violent proposals brought forward in the Duke's councils by such as are more hostile to your Majesty. And I need scarce remind your Majesty that the more direct and more violent suggestions find readiest acceptance with our master, who loves brief and dangerous measures better than those that are safe, but at the same time circuitous.'

'I remember,' said the King, 'I have seen him swim a river at the risk of drowning, though there was a bridge to be found for riding two hundred yards round.'

'True, sire; and he that weighs not his life against the gratification of a moment of impetuous passion will, on the same impulse, prefer the gratification of his will to the increase of his substantial power.'

'Most true,' replied the King; 'a fool will ever grasp rather at the appearance than the reality of authority. All this I know to be true of Charles of Burgundy. But,

my dear friend Des Comines, what do you infer from these premises?'

'Simply this, my lord,' answered the Burgundian, 'that as your Majesty has seen a skilful angler control a large and heavy fish, and finally draw him to land by a single hair, which fish had broke through a tackle tenfold stronger had the fisher presumed to strain the line on him, instead of giving him head enough for all his wild flourishes, even so your Majesty, by gratifying the Duke in these particulars on which he has pitched his ideas of honour and the gratification of his revenge, may evade many of the other unpalatable propositions at which I have hinted, and which — including, I must state openly to your Majesty, some of those through which France would be most especially weakened — will slide out of his remembrance and attention, and, being referred to subsequent conferences and future discussion, may be altogether eluded.'

'I understand you, my good Sir Philip; but to the matter,' said the King. 'To which of those happy propositions is your duke so much wedded that contradiction will make him unreasonable and untractable?'

'To any or all of them, if it please your Majesty, on which you may happen to contradict him. This is precisely what your Majesty must avoid; and to take up my former parable, you must needs remain on the watch, ready to give the Duke line enough whenever he shoots away under the impulse of his rage. His fury, already considerably abated, will waste itself if he be unopposed, and you will presently find him become more friendly and more tractable.'

'Still,' said the King, musing, 'there must be some particular demands which lie deeper at my cousin's heart than the other proposals. Were I but aware of these, Sir Philip —'

'Your Majesty may make the lightest of his demands the most important, simply by opposing it,' said Des Comines; 'nevertheless, my lord, thus far I can say, that every shadow of treaty will be broken off, if your Majesty renounce not William de la Marck and the Liegeois.'

'I have already said that I will disown them,' said the King, 'and well they deserve it at my hand: the villains have commenced their uproar at a moment that might have cost me my life.'

'He that fires a train of powder,' replied the historian, 'must expect a speedy explosion of the mine. But more than mere disavowal of their cause will be expected of your Majesty by Duke Charles; for know, that he will demand your Majesty's assistance to put the insurrection down, and your royal presence to witness the punishment which he destines for the rebels.'

'That may scarce consist with our honour, Des Comines,' said the King.

'To refuse it will scarcely consist with your Majesty's safety,' replied Des Comines. 'Charles is determined to show the people of Flanders that no hope, nay, no promise, of assistance, from France will save them in their mutinies from the wrath and vengeance of Burgundy.'

'But, Sir Philip, I will speak plainly,' answered the King. 'Could we but procrastinate the matter, might not these rogues of Liege make their own part good

against Duke Charles? The knaves are numerous and steady, can they not hold out their town against him?'

'With the help of the thousand archers of France whom your Majesty promised them, they might have done something: but —'

'Whom I promised them!' said the King. 'Alas! good Sir Philip! you much wrong me in saying so.'

'— But without whom,' continued Des Comines, not heeding the interruption, 'as your Majesty will not *now* likely find it convenient to supply them, what chance will the burghers have of making good their town, in whose walls the large breaches made by Charles after the battle of St. Tron are still unrepaired; so that the lances of Hainault, Brabant, and Burgundy may advance to the attack twenty men in front?'

'The improvident idiots!' said the King. 'If they have thus neglected their own safety, they deserve not my protection. Pass on; I will make no quarrel for their sake.'

'The next point, I fear, will sit closer to your Majesty's heart,' said Des Comines.

'Ah!' replied the King, 'you mean that infernal marriage! I will not consent to the breach of the contract betwixt my daughter Joan and my cousin of Orleans; it would be wresting the sceptre of France from me and my posterity, for that feeble boy the Dauphin is a blighted blossom, which will wither without fruit. This match between Joan and Orleans has been my thought by day, my dream by night. I tell thee, Sir Philip, I cannot give it up! Besides, it is inhuman to require me, with my own hand, to destroy at once my own scheme

of policy and the happiness of a pair brought up for each other.'

'Are they then so much attached?' said Des Comines.

'One of them at least is,' said the King, 'and the one for whom I am bound to be most anxious. But you smile, Sir Philip, you are no believer in the force of love.'

'Nay,' said Des Comines, 'if it please you, sire, I am so little an infidel in that particular that I was about to ask whether it would reconcile you in any degree to your acquiescing in the proposed marriage betwixt the Duke of Orleans and Isabelle de Croye, were I to satisfy you that the countess's inclinations are so much fixed on another that it is likely it will never be a match?'

King Louis sighed. 'Alas!' he said, 'my good and dear friend, from what sepulchre have you drawn such dead man's comfort? *Her* inclination, indeed! Why, to speak truth, supposing that Orleans detested my daughter Joan, yet, but for this ill-ravelled web of mischance, he must needs have married her; so you may conjecture how little chance there is of this damsel being able to refuse him under a similar compulsion, and he a child of France besides. Ah, no, Philip! little fear of her standing obstinate against the suit of such a lover. *Varium et mutabile*, Philip.'

'Your Majesty may, in the present instance, undervalue the obstinate courage of this young lady. She comes of a race determinately wilful; and I have picked out of Crèvecœur that she has formed a romantic attachment to a young squire, who, to say truth, rendered her many services on the road.'

'Ha!' said the King, 'an archer of my Guards, by name Quentin Durward?'

'The same, as I think,' said Des Comines; 'he was made prisoner along with the countess, travelling almost alone together.'

'Now, Our Lord and Our Lady, and Monseigneur St. Martin, and Monseigneur St. Julian be praised every one of them!' said the King, 'and all laud and honour to the learned Galeotti, who read in the stars that this youth's destiny was connected with mine! If the maiden be so attached to him as to make her refractory to the will of Burgundy, this Quentin hath indeed been rarely useful to me.'

'I believe, my lord,' answered the Burgundian, 'according to Crèvecœur's report, that there is some chance of her being sufficiently obstinate; besides, doubtless, the noble Duke himself, notwithstanding what your Majesty was pleased to hint in way of supposition, will not willingly renounce his fair cousin, to whom he has been long engaged.'

'Umph!' answered the King. 'But you have never seen my daughter Joan. A howlet, man! — an absolute owl, whom I am ashamed of! But let him be only a wise man, and marry her, I will give him leave to be mad *par amours* for the fairest lady in France. And now, Philip have you given me the full map of your master's mind?'

'I have possessed you, sire, of those particulars on which he is at present most disposed to insist. But your Majesty well knows that the Duke's disposition is like a sweeping torrent, which only passes smoothly forward when its waves encounter no opposition; and what may be presented to chafe him into fury, it is impossible even to guess. Were more distinct evidence of your

Majesty's practices — pardon the phrase, where there is so little time for selection — with the Liegeois and William de la Marck to occur unexpectedly, the issue might be terrible. There are strange news from that country: they say La Marck hath married Hameline the elder Countess of Croye.'

'That old fool was so mad on marriage that she would have accepted the hand of Satan,' said the King; 'but that La Marck, beast as he is, should have married her rather more surprises me.'

'There is a report also,' continued Des Comines, 'that an envoy, or herald, on La Marck's part, is approaching Péronne; this is like to drive the Duke frantic with rage. I trust that he has no letters, or the like, to show on your Majesty's part?'

'Letters to a Wild Boar!' answered the King. 'No — no, Sir Philip, I was no such fool as to cast pearls before swine. What little intercourse I had with the brute animal was by message, in which I always employed such low-bred slaves and vagabonds that their evidence would not be received in a trial for robbing a hen-roost.'

'I can then only further recommend,' said Des Comines, taking his leave, 'that your Majesty should remain on your guard, be guided by events, and, above all, avoid using any language or argument with the Duke which may better become your dignity than your present condition.'

'If my dignity,' said the King, 'grow troublesome to me, which it seldom doth while there are deeper interests to think of, I have a special remedy for that swelling of the heart. It is but looking into a certain ruinous

closet, Sir Philip, and thinking of the death of Charles the Simple; and it cures me as effectually as the cold bath would cool a fever. And now, my friend and monitor, must thou be gone? Well, Sir Philip, the time must come when thou wilt tire reading lessons of state policy to the Bull of Burgundy, who is incapable of comprehending your most simple argument. If Louis of Valois then lives, thou hast a friend in the court of France. I tell thee, my Philip, it would be a blessing to my kingdom should I ever acquire thee, who, with a profound view of subjects of state, hast also a conscience capable of feeling and discerning between right and wrong. So help me, Our Lord and Lady, and Monseigneur St. Martin, Oliver and Balue have hearts as hardened as the nether millstone; and my life is embittered by remorse and penances for the crimes they make me commit. Thou, Sir Philip, possessed of the wisdom of present and past times, canst teach how to become great without ceasing to be virtuous.'

'A hard task, and which few have attained,' said the historian, 'but which is yet within the reach of princes who will strive for it. Meantime, sire, be prepared, for the Duke will presently confer with you.'

Louis looked long after Philip when he left the apartment, and at length burst into a bitter laugh. 'He spoke of fishing — I have sent him home, a trout properly tickled! And he thinks himself virtuous because he took no bribe, but contented himself with flattery and promises, and the pleasure of avenging an affront to his vanity! Why, he is but so much the poorer for the refusal of the money, not a jot the more honest. He must be mine, though, for he hath the shrewdest head among

them. Well, now for nobler game! I am to face this leviathan Charles, who will presently swim hitherward, cleaving the deep before him. I must, like a trembling sailor, throw a tub overboard to amuse him. But I may one day find the chance — of driving a harpoon into his entrails!' [1]

[1] See Note 18.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE INTERVIEW

Hold fast thy truth, young soldier. Gentle maiden,
Keep you your promise plight; leave age its subtleties,
And grey-hair'd policy its maze of falsehood;
But be you candid as the morning sky,
Ere the high sun sucks vapours up to stain it.

The Trial.

On the perilous and important morning which preceded the meeting of the two princes in the Castle of Péronne, Oliver le Dain did his master the service of an active and skilful agent, making interest for Louis in every quarter, both with presents and promises; so that, when the Duke's anger should blaze forth, all around should be interested to smother, and not to increase, the conflagration. He glided, like night, from tent to tent, from house to house, making himself friends, but not, in the Apostle's sense, with the Mammon of unrighteousness. As was said of another active political agent, 'His finger was in every man's palm, his mouth was in every man's ear'; and for various reasons, some of which we have formerly hinted at, he secured the favour of many Burgundian nobles, who either had something to hope or fear from France, or who thought that, were the power of Louis too much reduced, their own duke would be likely to pursue the road to despotic authority, to which his heart naturally inclined him, with a daring and unopposed pace.

Where Oliver suspected his own presence or argu-

ments might be less acceptable, he employed that of other servants of the King; and it was in this manner that he obtained, by the favour of the Count de Crèvecœur, an interview betwixt Lord Crawford, accompanied by Le Balafré, and Quentin Durward, who, since he had arrived at Péronne, had been detained in a sort of honourable confinement. Private affairs were assigned as the cause of requesting this meeting; but it is probable that Crèvecœur, who was afraid that his master might be stirred up in passion to do something dishonourably violent towards Louis, was not sorry to afford an opportunity to Crawford to give some hints to the young archer which might prove useful to his master.

The meeting between the countrymen was cordial, and even affecting.

'Thou art a singular youth,' said Crawford, stroking the head of young Durward as a grandsire might do that of his descendant. 'Certes, you have had as meikle good fortune as if you had been born with a lucky hood on your head.'

'All comes of his gaining an archer's place at such early years,' said Le Balafré; 'I never was so much talked of, fair nephew, because I was five-and-twenty years old before I was *hors de page*.'

'And an ill-looking mountainous monster of a page thou wert, Ludovic,' said the old commander, 'with a beard like a baker's shool, and a back like old Wallace Wight.'

'I fear,' said Quentin, with downcast eyes, 'I shall enjoy that title to distinction but a short time, since it is my purpose to resign the service of the Archer Guard.'

Le Balafré was struck almost mute with astonish-

ment, and Crawford's ancient features gleamed with displeasure. The former at length mustered words enough to say, 'Resign! — leave your place in the Scottish Archers? such a thing was never dreamt of. I would not give up my situation, to be made Constable of France.'

'Hush! Ludovic,' said Crawford; 'this youngster knows better how to shape his course with the wind than we of the old world do. His journey hath given him some pretty tales to tell about King Louis; and he is turning Burgundian, that he may make his own little profit by telling them to Duke Charles.'

'If I thought so,' said Le Balafré, 'I would cut his throat with my own hands, were he fifty times my sister's son!'

'But you would first inquire whether I deserved to be so treated, fair kinsman?' answered Quentin. 'And you, my lord, know that I am no tale-bearer; nor shall either question or torture draw out of me a word to King Louis's prejudice which may have come to my knowledge while I was in his service. So far my oath of duty keeps me silent. But I will not remain in that service, in which, besides the perils of fair battle with mine enemies, I am to be exposed to the dangers of ambuscade on the part of my friends.'

'Nay, if he objects to lying in ambuscade,' said the slow-witted Le Balafré, looking sorrowfully at the Lord Crawford, 'I am afraid, my lord, that all is over with him! I myself have had thirty bushments break upon me, and truly I think I have laid in ambuscade twice as often myself, it being a favourite practice in our King's mode of making war.'

'It is so, indeed, Ludovic,' answered Lord Crawford; 'nevertheless, hold your peace, for I believe I understand this gear better than you do.'

'I wish to Our Lady you may, my lord,' answered Ludovic; 'but it wounds me to the very midriff to think my sister's son should fear an ambushment.'

'Young man,' said Crawford, 'I partly guess your meaning. You have met foul play on the road where you travelled by the King's command, and you think you have reason to charge him with being the author of it?'

'I have been threatened with foul play in the execution of the King's commission,' answered Quentin; 'but I have had the good fortune to elude it; whether his Majesty be innocent or guilty in the matter, I leave to God and his own conscience. He fed me when I was a-hungered, received me when I was a wandering stranger; I will never load him in his adversity with accusations which may indeed be unjust, since I heard them only from the vilest mouths.'

'My dear boy — my own lad!' said Crawford, taking him in his arms, 'ye think like a Scot, every joint of you! Like one that will forget a cause of quarrel with a friend whose back is already at the wall, and remember nothing of him but his kindness.'

'Since my Lord Crawford has embraced my nephew,' said Ludovic Lesly, 'I will embrace him also, though I would have you to know, that to understand the service of an ambushment is as necessary to a soldier as it is to a priest to be able to read his breviary.'

'Be hushed, Ludovic,' said Crawford; 'ye are an ass, my friend, and ken not the blessing Heaven has sent

you in this braw callant. And now tell me, Quentin, my man, hath the King any advice of this brave, Christian, and manly resolution of yours? for, poor man, he had need, in his strait, to ken what he has to reckon upon. Had he but brought the whole brigade of Guards with him — but God's will be done! Kens he of your purpose, think you?'

'I really can hardly tell,' answered Quentin; 'but I assured his learned astrologer, Martius Galeotti, of my resolution to be silent on all that could injure the King with the Duke of Burgundy. The particulars which I suspect I will not — under your favour — communicate even to your lordship; and to the philosopher I was, of course, far less willing to unfold myself.'

'Ha! — ay!' answered Lord Crawford. 'Oliver did indeed tell me that Galeotti prophesied most stoutly concerning the line of conduct you were to hold; and I am truly glad to find he did so on better authority than the stars.'

'*He* prophesy!' said Le Balafré, laughing. 'The stars never told him that honest Ludovic Lesly used to help yonder wench of his to spend the fair ducats he flings into her lap.'

'Hush! Ludovic,' said his captain — 'hush! thou beast, man! If thou dost not respect my grey hairs, because I have been e'en too much of a *routier* myself, respect the boy's youth and innocence, and let us have no more of such unbecoming daffing.'

'Your honour may say your pleasure,' answered Ludovic Lesly; 'but, by my faith, second-sighted Saunders Souplejaw, the town-souter of Glen Houlakin, was worth Gallotti, or Gallipotty, or whatever ye call him, twice

told, for a prophet. He foretold that all my sister's children would die some day; and he foretold it in the very hour that the youngest was born, and that is this lad Quentin, who, no doubt, will one day die, to make up the prophecy — the more 's the pity; the whole curney of them is gone but himself. And Saunders foretold to myself one day, that I should be made by marriage, which doubtless will also happen in due time, though it hath not yet come to pass, though how or when, I can hardly guess, as I care not myself for the wedded state, and Quentin is but a lad. Also, Saunders predicted —'

'Nay,' said Lord Crawford, 'unless the prediction be singularly to the purpose, I must cut you short, my good Ludovic; for both you and I must now leave your nephew, with prayers to Our Lady to strengthen him in the good mind he is in; for this is a case in which a light word might do more mischief than all the Parliament of Paris could mend. My blessing with you, my lad; and be in no hurry to think of leaving our body, for there will be good blows going presently in the eye of day, and no ambuscade.'

'And my blessing too, nephew,' said Ludovic Lesly; 'for, since you have satisfied our most noble captain, I also am satisfied, as in duty bound.'

'Stay, my lord,' said Quentin, and led Lord Crawford a little apart from his uncle. 'I must not forget to mention that there is a person besides in the world, who, having learned from me these circumstances which it is essential to King Louis's safety should at present remain concealed, may not think that the same obligation of secrecy which attaches to me as the King's soldier,

and as having been relieved by his bounty, is at all binding on her.'

'On *her!*' replied Crawford; 'nay, if there be a woman in the secret, the Lord ha' mercy, for we are all on the rocks again!'

'Do not suppose so, my lord,' replied Durward, 'but use your interest with the Count of Crèvecœur to permit me an interview with the Countess Isabelle of Croye, who is the party possessed of my secret, and I doubt not that I can persuade her to be as silent as I shall unquestionably myself remain concerning whatever may incense the Duke against King Louis.'

The old soldier mused for a long time, looked up to the ceiling, then down again upon the floor, then shook his head, and at length said, 'There is something in all this which, by my honour, I do not understand. The Countess Isabelle of Croye! an interview with a lady of her birth, blood, and possessions, and thou, a raw Scottish lad, so certain of carrying thy point with her! Thou art either strangely confident, my young friend, or else you have used your time well upon the journey. But, by the cross of St. Andrew! I will move Crèvecœur in thy behalf; and, as he truly fears that Duke Charles may be provoked against the King to the extremity of falling foul, I think it likely he may grant thy request, though, by my honour, it is a comical one.'

So saying, and shrugging up his shoulders, the old lord left the apartment, followed by Ludovic Lesly, who, forming his looks on those of his principal, endeavoured, though knowing nothing of the cause of his wonder, to look as mysterious and important as Crawford himself.

In a few minutes Crawford returned, but without his attendant Le Balafré. The old man seemed in singular humor, laughing and chuckling to himself in a manner which strangely distorted his stern and rigid features, and at the same time shaking his head, as at something which he could not help condemning, while he found it irresistibly ludicrous. 'My certes, countryman,' said he, 'but you are not blate: you will never lose fair lady for faint heart! Crèvecœur swallowed your proposal as he would have done a cup of vinegar, and swore to me roundly, by all the saints in Burgundy, that were less than the honour of princes and the peace of kingdoms at stake, you should never see even so much as the print of the Countess Isabelle's foot on the clay. Were it not that he had a dame, and a fair one, I would have thought that he meant to break a lance for the prize himself. Perhaps he thinks of his nephew, the County Stephen. A countess! would no less serve you to be minting at? But come along; your interview with her must be brief. But I fancy you know how to make the most of little time — ho! ho! ho! By my faith, I can hardly chide thee for the presumption, I have such a good will to laugh at it!'

With a brow like scarlet, at once offended and disconcerted by the blunt inferences of the old soldier, and vexed at beholding in what an absurd light his passion was viewed by every person of experience, Durward followed Lord Crawford in silence to the Ursuline convent in which the countess was lodged, and in the parlour of which he found the Count de Crèvecœur.

'So, young gallant,' said the latter, sternly, 'you must

see the fair companion of your romantic expedition once more, it seems?'

'Yes, my lord count,' answered Quentin, firmly; 'and what is more, I must see her alone.'

'That shall never be,' said the Count de Crèvecœur. 'Lord Crawford, I make you judge. This young lady, the daughter of my old friend and companion in arms, the richest heiress in Burgundy, has confessed a sort of a — what was I going to say? — in short, she is a fool, and your man-at-arms here a presumptuous coxcomb. In a word, they shall not meet alone.'

'Then will I not speak a single word to the countess in your presence,' said Quentin, much delighted. 'You have told me much that I did not dare, presumptuous as I may be, even to hope.'

'Ay, truly said, my friend,' said Crawford. 'You have been imprudent in your communications; and, since you refer to me, and there is a good stout grating across the parlor, I would advise you to trust to it, and let them do the worst with their tongues. What, man! the life of a king, and many thousands besides, is not to be weighed with the chance of two young things whilly-whawing in ilk other's ears for a minute?'

So saying, he dragged off Crèvecœur, who followed very reluctantly, and cast many angry glances at the young archer as he left the room.

In a moment after the Countess Isabelle entered on the other side of the grate, and no sooner saw Quentin alone in the parlour than she stopped short, and cast her eyes on the ground for the space of half a minute. 'Yet why should I be ungrateful,' she said, 'because others are unjustly suspicious? My friend — my pre-

server, I may almost say, so much have I been beset by treachery — my only faithful and constant friend!'

As she spoke thus, she extended her hand to him through the grate, nay, suffered him to retain it until he had covered it with kisses, not unmingled with tears. She only said, 'Durward, were we ever to meet again, I would not permit this folly.'

If it be considered that Quentin had guarded her through so many perils, that he had been, in truth, her only faithful and zealous protector, perhaps my fair readers, even if countesses and heiresses should be of the number, will pardon the derogation.

But the countess extricated her hand at length, and stepping a pace back from the grate, asked Durward, in a very embarrassed tone, what boon he had to ask of her? 'For that you have a request to make I have learned from the old Scottish lord, who came here but now with my cousin of Crèvecœur. Let it be but reasonable,' she said, 'but such as poor Isabelle can grant with duty and honour uninfringed, and you cannot tax my slender powers too highly. But O! do not speak hastily; do not say,' she added, looking around with timidity, 'aught that might, if overheard, do prejudice to us both!'

'Fear not, noble lady,' said Quentin, sorrowfully; 'it is not *here* that I can forget the distance which fate has placed between us, or expose you to the censure of your proud kindred as the object of the most devoted love to one, poorer and less powerful, not perhaps less noble, than themselves. Let that pass like a dream of the night to all but one bosom, where, dream as it is, it will fill up the room of all existing realities.'

'Hush — hush!' said Isabelle; 'for your own sake, for mine, be silent on such a theme. Tell me rather what it is you have to ask of me.'

'Forgiveness to one,' replied Quentin, 'who, for his own selfish views, hath conducted himself as your enemy.'

'I trust I forgive all my enemies,' answered Isabelle; 'but oh, Durward! through what scenes have your courage and presence of mind protected me! Yonder bloody hall! the good bishop! I knew not till yesterday half the horrors I had unconsciously witnessed.'

'Do not think on them,' said Quentin, who saw the transient colour which had come to her cheek during their conference fast fading into the most deadly paleness. 'Do not look back, but look steadily forward, as they needs must who walk in a perilous road. Hearken to me. King Louis deserves nothing better at your hand, of all others, than to be proclaimed the wily and insidious politician which he really is. But to tax him as the encourager of your flight, still more as the author of a plan to throw you into the hands of De la Marck, will at this moment produce perhaps the King's death or dethronement; and, at all events, the most bloody war between France and Burgundy which the two countries have ever been engaged in.'

'These evils shall not arrive for my sake, if they can be prevented,' said the Countess Isabelle; 'and indeed your slightest request were enough to make me forego my revenge, were that at any time a passion which I deeply cherish. Is it possible I would rather remember King Louis's injuries than your invaluable services? Yet how is this to be? When I am called before my

sovereign, the Duke of Burgundy, I must either stand silent or speak the truth. The former would be contumacy; and to a false tale you will not desire me to train my tongue.'

'Surely not,' said Durward; 'but let your evidence concerning Louis be confined to what you yourself positively know to be truth; and when you mention what others have reported, no matter how credibly, let it be as reports only, and beware of pledging your own personal evidence to that which, though you may fully believe, you cannot personally know, to be true. The assembled council of Burgundy cannot refuse to a monarch the justice which in my country is rendered to the meanest person under accusation. They must esteem him innocent until direct and sufficient proof shall demonstrate his guilt. Now, what does not consist with your own certain knowledge should be proved by other evidence than your report from hearsay.'

'I think I understand you,' said the Countess Isabelle.

'I will make my meaning plainer,' said Quentin; and was illustrating it accordingly by more than one instance, when the convent-bell tolled.

'That,' said the countess, 'is a signal that we must part — part for ever! But do not forget me, Durward; I will never forget you; your faithful services —'

She could not speak more, but again extended her hand, which was again pressed to his lips; and I know not how it was that, in endeavouring to withdraw her hand, the countess came so close to the grating that Quentin was encouraged to press the adieu on her lips. The young lady did not chide him; perhaps there was no time, for Crèvecœur and Crawford, who had been

from some loop-hole eye-witnesses, if not ear-witnesses also, of what was passing, rushed into the apartment, the first in a towering passion, the latter laughing and holding the count back.

'To your chamber, young mistress — to your chamber!' exclaimed the count to Isabelle, who, flinging down her veil, retired in all haste, 'which should be exchanged for a cell and bread and water. And you, gentle sir, who are so malapert, the time will come when the interests of kings and kingdoms may not be connected with such as you are; and you shall then learn the penalty of your audacity in raising your beggarly eyes —'

'Hush — hush! enough said — rein up — rein up,' said the old lord; 'and you, Quentin, I command you, be silent, and begone to your quarters. There is no such room for so much scorn neither, Sir Count of Crèvecœur, that I must say now he is out of hearing. Quentin Durward is as much a gentleman as the King, only, as the Spaniard says, not so rich. He is as noble as myself, and I am chief of my name. Tush, tush! man, you must not speak to us of penalties.'

'My lord — my lord,' said Crèvecœur, impatiently, 'the insolence of these foreign mercenaries is proverbial, and should receive rather rebuke than encouragement from you, who are their leader.'

'My lord count,' answered Crawford, 'I have ordered my command for these fifty years without advice either from Frenchman or Burgundian; and I intend to do so, under your favour, so long as I shall continue to hold it.'

'Well — well, my lord,' said Crèvecœur, 'I meant you no disrespect; your nobleness, as well as your age, en-

title you to be privileged in your impatience; and for these young people, I am satisfied to overlook the past, since I will take care that they never meet again.'

'Do not take that upon your salvation, Crèvecœur,' said the old lord, laughing; 'mountains, it is said, may meet, and why not mortal creatures that have legs, and life and love to put those legs in motion? Yon kiss, Crèvecœur, came tenderly off; methinks it was ominous.'

'You are striving again to disturb my patience,' said Crèvecœur, 'but I will not give you that advantage over me. Hark! they toll the summons to the castle; an awful meeting, of which God only can foretell the issue.'

'This issue I can foretell,' said the old Scottish lord, 'that if violence is to be offered to the person of the King, few as his friends are, and surrounded by his enemies, he shall neither fall alone nor unavenged; and grieved I am that his own positive orders have prevented my taking measures to prepare for such an issue.'

'My Lord of Crawford,' said the Burgundian, 'to anticipate such evil is the sure way to give occasion to it. Obey the orders of your royal master, and give no pretext for violence by taking hasty offence, and you will find that the day will pass over more smoothly than you now conjecture.'

CHAPTER XXXII

THE INVESTIGATION

Me rather had my heart might feel your love,
Than my unpleas'd eye see your courtesy.
Up, cousin, up; your heart is up, I know,
Thus high at least, although your knee —

King Richard II.

At the first toll of the bell, which was to summon the great nobles of Burgundy together in council, with the very few French peers who could be present on the occasion, Duke Charles, followed by a part of his train, armed with partizans and battle-axes, entered the hall of Herbert's Tower, in the Castle of Péronne. King Louis, who had expected the visit, arose and made two steps towards the Duke, and then remained standing with an air of dignity, which, in spite of the meanness of his dress and the familiarity of his ordinary manners, he knew very well how to assume when he judged it necessary. Upon the present important crisis, the composure of his demeanour had an evident effect upon his rival, who changed the abrupt and hasty step with which he entered the apartment into one more becoming a great vassal entering the presence of his lord paramount. Apparently the Duke had formed the internal resolution to treat Louis, in the outset at least, with the formalities due to his high station; but at the same time it was evident that, in doing so, he put no small constraint upon the fiery impatience of his own disposition, and was scarce able to control the feelings of resentment

and the thirst of revenge which boiled in his bosom. Hence, though he compelled himself to use the outward acts, and in some degree the language, of courtesy and reverence, his colour came and went rapidly; his voice was abrupt, hoarse, and broken; his limbs shook, as if impatient of the curb imposed on his motions; he frowned and bit his lip until the blood came; and every look and movement showed that the most passionate prince who ever lived was under the dominion of one of his most violent paroxyms of fury.

The King marked this war of passion with a calm and untroubled eye; for, though he gathered from the Duke's looks a foretaste of the bitterness of death, which he dreaded alike as a mortal and a sinful man, yet he was resolved, like a wary and skilful pilot, neither to suffer himself to be disconcerted by his own fears, nor to abandon the helm, while there was a chance of saving the vessel by adroit pilotage. Therefore, when the Duke, in a hoarse and broken tone, said something of the scarcity of his accommodations, he answered with a smile, that he could not complain, since he had as yet found Herbert's Tower a better residence than it had proved to one of his ancestors.

'They told you the tradition then?' said Charles. 'Yes; here he was slain, but it was because he refused to take the cowl, and finish his days in a monastery.'

'The more fool he,' said Louis, affecting unconcern, 'since he gained the torment of being a martyr without the merit of being a saint.'

'I come,' said the Duke, 'to pray your Majesty to attend a high council, at which things of weight are to be deliberated upon concerning the welfare of France

and Burgundy. You will presently meet them — that is, if such be your pleasure —'

'Nay, my fair cousin,' said the King, 'never strain courtesy so far as to entreat what you may so boldly command. To council, since such is your Grace's pleasure. We are somewhat shorn of our train,' he added, looking upon the small suite that arranged themselves to attend him; 'but you, cousin, must shine out for us both.'

Marshalled by Toison d'Or, chief of the heralds of Burgundy, the princes left the Earl Herbert's Tower and entered the castle-yard, which Louis observed was filled with the Duke's body-guard and men-at-arms, splendidly accoutred and drawn up in martial array. Crossing the court, they entered the council-hall, which was in a much more modern part of the building than that of which Louis had been the tenant, and, though in disrepair, had been hastily arranged for the solemnity of a public council. Two chairs of state were erected under the same canopy, that for the King being raised two steps higher than the one which the Duke was to occupy; about twenty of the chief nobility sat, arranged in due order, on either hand of the chair of state; and thus, when both the princes were seated, the person for whose trial, as it might be called, the council was summoned, held the highest place, and appeared to preside in it.

It was perhaps to get rid of this inconsistency, and the scruples which might have been inspired by it, that Duke Charles, having bowed slightly to the royal chair, bluntly opened the sitting with the following words: —

'My good vassals and counsellors, it is not unknown

to you what disturbances have arisen in our territories, both in our father's time and in our own, from the rebellion of vassals against superiors, and subjects against their princes. And lately we have had the most dreadful proof of the height to which these evils have arrived in our case by the scandalous flight of the Countess Isabelle of Croye, and her aunt the Lady Hameline, to take refuge with a foreign power, thereby renouncing their fealty to us and inferring the forfeiture of their fiefs; and in another more dreadful and deplorable instance, by the sacrilegious and bloody murder of our beloved brother and ally the Bishop of Liege, and the rebellion of that treacherous city, which was but too mildly punished for the last insurrection. We have been informed that these sad events may be traced not merely to the inconstancy and folly of women and the presumption of pampered citizens, but to the agency of foreign power, and the interference of a mighty neighbour, from whom, if good deeds could merit any return in kind, Burgundy could have expected nothing but the most sincere and devoted friendship. If this should prove truth,' said the Duke, setting his teeth and pressing his heel against the ground, 'what consideration shall withhold us, the means being in our power, from taking such measures as shall effectually, and at the very source, close up the main spring from which these evils have yearly flowed on us?'

The Duke had begun his speech with some calmness, but he elevated his voice at the conclusion; and the last sentence was spoken in a tone which made all the counsellors tremble, and brought a transient fit of paleness across the King's cheek. He instantly recalled his courage, however, and addressed the council in his turn, in a

tone evincing so much ease and composure that the Duke, though he seemed desirous to interrupt or stop him, found no decent opportunity to do so.

'Nobles of France and of Burgundy,' he said, 'knights of the Holy Spirit and of the Golden Fleece, since a king must plead his cause as an accused person, he cannot desire more distinguished judges than the flower of nobleness and muster and pride of chivalry. Our fair cousin of Burgundy hath but darkened the dispute between us in so far as his courtesy has declined to state it in precise terms. I, who have no cause for observing such delicacy, nay, whose condition permits me not to do so, crave leave to speak more precisely. It is to us, my lords — to us, his liege lord, his kinsman, his ally — that unhappy circumstances, perverting our cousin's clear judgment and better nature, have induced him to apply the hateful charges of seducing his vassals from their allegiance, stirring up the people of Liege to revolt, and stimulating the outlawed William de la Marck to commit a most cruel and sacrilegious murder. Nobles of France and Burgundy, I might truly appeal to the circumstances in which I now stand as being in themselves a complete contradiction of such an accusation; for is it to be supposed that, having the sense of a rational being left me, I should have thrown myself unreservedly into the power of the Duke of Burgundy, while I was practising treachery against him such as could not fail to be discovered, and which, being discovered, must place me, as I now stand, in the power of a justly exasperated prince? The folly of one who should seat himself quietly down to repose on a mine, after he had lighted the match which was to cause instant explosion, would have

been wisdom compared to mine. I have no doubt that, amongst the perpetrators of those horrible treasons at Schonwaldt, villains have been busy with my name; but am I to be answerable, who have given them no right to use it? If two silly women, disgusted on account of some romantic cause of displeasure, sought refuge at my court, does it follow that they did so by my direction? It will be found, when inquired into, that, since honour and chivalry forbade my sending them back prisoners to the court of Burgundy, — which, I think, gentlemen, no one who wears the collar of these orders would suggest, — that I came as nearly as possible to the same point by placing them in the hands of the venerable father in God, who is now a saint in Heaven.' Here Louis seemed much affected, and pressed his kerchief to his eyes. 'In the hands, I say, of a member of my own family, and still more closely united with that of Burgundy, whose situation, exalted condition in the church, and, alas! whose numerous virtues qualified him to be the protector of these unhappy wanderers for a little while, and the mediator betwixt them and their liege lord. I say, therefore, the only circumstances which seem, in my brother of Burgundy's hasty view of this subject, to argue unworthy suspicions against me are such as can be explained on the fairest and most honourable motives; and I say, moreover, that no one particle of credible evidence can be brought to support the injurious charges which have induced my brother to alter his friendly looks towards one who came to him in full confidence of friendship, have caused him to turn his festive hall into a court of justice, and his hospitable apartments into a prison.'

'My lord — my lord,' said Charles, breaking in as soon as the King paused, 'for your being here at a time so unluckily coinciding with the execution of your projects, I can only account by supposing that those who make it their trade to impose on others do sometimes egregiously delude themselves. The engineer is sometimes killed by the springing of his own petard. For what is to follow, let it depend on the event of this solemn inquiry. Bring hither the Countess Isabelle of Croye!'

As the young lady was introduced, supported on the one side by the Countess of Crèvecœur, who had her husband's commands to that effect, and on the other by the abbess of the Ursuline convent, Charles exclaimed with his usual harshness of voice and manner, 'Soh! sweet princess, you, who could scarce find breath to answer us when we last laid our just and reasonable commands on you, yet have had wind enough to run as long a course as ever did hunted doe, what think you of the fair work you have made between two great princes and two mighty countries, that have been like to go to war for your baby face?'

The publicity of the scene and the violence of Charles's manner totally overcame the resolution which Isabelle had formed of throwing herself at the Duke's feet, and imploring him to take possession of her estates and permit her to retire into a cloister. She stood motionless like a terrified female in a storm, who hears the thunder roll on every side of her, and apprehends in every fresh peal the bolt which is to strike her dead. The Countess of Crèvecœur, a woman of spirit equal to her birth, and to the beauty which she preserved even in her matronly

years, judged it necessary to interfere. 'My lord duke,' she said, 'my fair cousin is under my protection. I know better than your Grace how women should be treated, and we will leave this presence instantly, unless you use a tone and language more suitable to our rank and sex.'

The Duke burst out into a laugh. 'Crèvecœur,' he said, 'thy tameness hath made a lordly dame of thy countess; but that is no affair of mine. Give a seat to yonder simple girl, to whom, so far from feeling enmity, I design the highest grace and honour. Sit down, mistress, and tell us at your leisure what fiend possessed you to fly from your native country, and embrace the trade of a damsel adventurous.'

With much pain, and not without several interruptions, Isabelle confessed that, being absolutely determined against a match proposed to her by the Duke of Burgundy, she had indulged the hope of obtaining protection of the court of France.

'And under protection of the French monarch,' said Charles. 'Of that, doubtless, you were well assured?'

'I did indeed so think myself assured,' said the Countess Isabelle, 'otherwise I had not taken a step so decided.' Here Charles looked upon Louis with a smile of inexpressible bitterness, which the King supported with the utmost firmness, except that his lip grew something whiter than it was wont to be. 'But my information concerning King Louis's intentions towards us,' continued the countess, after a short pause, 'was almost entirely derived from my unhappy aunt, the Lady Hameline, and her opinions were formed upon the assertions and insinuations of persons whom I have since discovered to be the vilest traitors and most faithless wretches in

the world.' She then stated, in brief terms, what she had since come to learn of the treachery of Marthon, and of Hayraddin Maugrabin, and added that 'she entertained no doubt that the elder Maugrabin, called Zamet, the original adviser of their flight, was capable of every species of treachery, as well as of assuming the character of an agent of Louis without authority.'

There was a pause while the countess had continued her story, which she prosecuted, though very briefly, from the time she left the territories of Burgundy, in company with her aunt, until the storming of Schonwaldt, and her final surrender to the Count of Crèvecœur. All remained mute after she had finished her brief and broken narrative, and the Duke of Burgundy bent his fierce dark eyes on the ground, like one who seeks for a pretext to indulge his passion, but finds none sufficiently plausible to justify himself in his own eyes. 'The mole,' he said at length, looking upwards, 'winds not his dark subterranean path beneath our feet the less certainly, that we, though conscious of his motions, cannot absolutely trace them. Yet I would know of King Louis, wherefore he maintained these ladies at his court, had they not gone thither by his own invitation.'

'I did not so entertain them, fair cousin,' answered the King. 'Out of compassion, indeed, I received them in privacy, but took an early opportunity of placing them under the protection of the late excellent bishop, your own ally, and who was — may God assoil him! — a better judge than I, or any secular prince, how to reconcile the protection due to fugitives with the duty which a king owes to his ally from whose dominions they have fled. I boldly ask this young lady whether my

reception of them was cordial or whether it was not, on the contrary, such as made them express regret that they had made my court their place of refuge?'

'So much was it otherwise than cordial,' answered the countess, 'that it induced me, at least to doubt how far it was possible that your Majesty should have actually given the invitation of which we had been assured by those who called themselves your agents; since, supposing them to have proceeded only as they were duly authorised, it would have been hard to reconcile your Majesty's conduct with that to be expected from a King, a knight, and a gentleman.'

The countess turned her eyes to the King as she spoke, with a look which was probably intended as a reproach, but the breast of Louis was armed against all such artillery. On the contrary, waving slowly his expanded hands, and looking around the circle, he seemed to make a triumphant appeal to all present upon the testimony borne to his innocence in the countess's reply.

Burgundy, meanwhile, cast on him a look which seemed to say that, if in some degree silenced, he was as far as ever from being satisfied, and then said abruptly to the countess, 'Methinks, fair mistress, in this account of your wanderings, you have forgot all mention of certain love-passages. So, ho! blushing already? Certain knights of the forest, by whom your quiet was for a time interrupted. Well, that incident hath come to our ear, and something we may presently form out of it. Tell me, King Louis, were it not well, before this vagrant Helen of Troy, or of Croye, set more kings by the ears — were it not well to carve out a fitting match for her?'

King Louis, though conscious what ungrateful proposal was likely to be made next, gave a calm and silent assent to what Charles said; but the countess herself was restored to courage by the very extremity of her situation. She quitted the arm of the Countess of Crèvecœur, on which she had hitherto leaned, came forward timidly, yet with an air of dignity, and, kneeling before the Duke's throne, thus addressed him: 'Noble Duke of Burgundy, and my liege lord, I acknowledge my fault in having withdrawn myself from your dominions without your gracious permission, and will most humbly acquiesce in any penalty you are pleased to impose. I place my lands and castles at your rightful disposal, and pray you only of your own bounty, and for the sake of my father's memory, to allow the last of the line of Croye, out of her large estate, such a moderate maintenance as may find her admission into a convent for the remainder of her life.'

'What think you, sire, of the young person's petition to us?' said the Duke, addressing Louis.

'As of a holy and humble motion,' said the King, 'which doubtless comes from that grace which ought not to be resisted or withstood.'

'The humble and lowly shall be exalted,' said Charles. 'Arise, Countess Isabelle; we mean better for you than you have devised for yourself. We mean neither to sequestrate your estates nor to abase your honours, but, on the contrary, will add largely to both.'

'Alas! my lord,' said the countess, continuing on her knees, 'it is even that well-meant goodness which I fear still more than your Grace's displeasure, since it compels me —'

'St. George of Burgundy!' said Duke Charles, 'is our will to be thwarted, and our commands disputed, at every turn? Up, I say, minion, and withdraw for the present; when we have time to think of thee, we will so order matters, that, *Teste-St.-Gris!* you shall either obey us or do worse.'

Notwithstanding this stern answer, the Countess Isabelle remained at his feet, and would probably, by her pertinacity, have driven him to say upon the spot something yet more severe, had not the Countess of Crèvecœur, who better knew that prince's humour, interfered to raise her young friend, and to conduct her from the hall.

Quentin Durward was now summoned to appear, and presented himself before the King and Duke with that freedom, distant alike from bashful reserve and intrusive boldness, which becomes a youth at once well-born and well-nurtured, who gives honour where it is due, but without permitting himself to be dazzled or confused by the presence of those to whom it is to be rendered. His uncle had furnished him with the means of again equipping himself in the arms and dress of an archer of the Scottish Guard, and his complexion, mien, and air suited in an uncommon degree his splendid appearance. His extreme youth, too, prepossessed the counsellors in his favour, the rather that no one could easily believe that the sagacious Louis would have chosen so very young a person to become the confidant of political intrigues; and thus the King enjoyed, in this as in other cases, considerable advantage from his singular choice of agents, both as to age and rank, where such election seemed least likely to be made. At the command

of the Duke, sanctioned by that of Louis, Quentin commenced an account of his journey with the Ladies of Croye to the neighbourhood of Liege, premising a statement of King Louis's instructions, which were that he should escort them safely to the castle of the bishop.

'And you obeyed my orders accordingly?' said the King.

'I did, sire,' replied the Scot.

'You omit a circumstance,' said the Duke. 'You were set upon in the forest by two wandering knights.'

'It does not become me to remember or to proclaim such an incident,' said the youth, blushing ingenuously.

'But it doth not become *me* to forget it,' said the Duke of Orleans. 'This youth discharged his commission manfully, and maintained his trust in a manner that I shall long remember. Come to my apartment, archer, when this matter is over, and thou shalt find I have not forgot thy brave bearing, while I am glad to see it is equalled by thy modesty.'

'And come to mine,' said Dunois. 'I have a helmet for thee, since I think I owe thee one.'

Quentin bowed low to both, and the examination was resumed. At the command of Duke Charles, he produced the written instructions which he had received for the direction of his journey.

'Did you follow these instructions literally, soldier?' said the Duke.

'No, if it please your Grace,' replied Quentin. 'They directed me, as you may be pleased to observe, to cross the Maes near Namur; whereas I kept the left bank, as being both the nigher and the safer road to Liege.'

'And wherefore that alteration?' said the Duke.

'Because I began to suspect the fidelity of my guide,' answered Quentin.

'Now mark the questions I have next to ask thee,' said the Duke. 'Reply truly to them, and fear nothing from the resentment of any one. But if you palter or double in your answers, I will have thee hung alive in an iron chain from the steeple of the market-house, where thou shalt wish for death for many an hour ere he come to relieve you!'

There was a deep silence ensued. At length, having given the youth time, as he thought, to consider the circumstances in which he was placed, the Duke demanded to know of Durward who his guide was, by whom supplied, and wherefore he had been led to entertain suspicion of him? To the first of these questions Quentin Durward answered by naming Hayraddin Maugrabin, the Bohemian; to the second, that the guide had been recommended by Tristan l'Hermite; and in reply to the third point, he mentioned what had happened in the Franciscan convent, near Namur; how the Bohemian had been expelled from the holy house, and how, jealous of his behaviour, he had dogged him to a rendezvous with one of William de la Marck's lanzknechts, where he overheard them arrange a plan for surprising the ladies who were under his protection.

'Now, hark thee,' said the Duke, 'and once more remember thy life depends on thy veracity, did these villains mention their having this king's — I mean this very King Louis of France's — authority for their scheme of surprising the escort and carrying away the ladies?'

'If such infamous fellows had said so,' replied Quentin, 'I know not how I should have believed them, having

the word of the King himself to place in opposition to theirs.'

Louis, who had listened hitherto with most earnest attention, could not help drawing his breath deeply when he heard Durward's answer, in the manner of one from whose bosom a heavy weight has been at once removed. The Duke again looked disconcerted and moody; and, returning to the charge, questioned Quentin still more closely, whether he did not understand, from these men's private conversation, that the plots which they meditated had King Louis's sanction?

'I repeat that I heard nothing which could authorize me to say so,' answered the young man, who, though internally convinced of the King's accession to the treachery of Hayraddin, yet held it contrary to his allegiance to bring forward his own suspicions on the subject; 'and if I *had* heard such men make such an assertion, I again say that I would not have given their testimony weight against the instructions of the King himself.'

'Thou art a faithful messenger,' said the Duke, with a sneer; 'and I venture to say that, in obeying the King's instructions, thou hast disappointed his expectations in a manner that thou mightest have smarted for, but that subsequent events have made thy bull-headed fidelity seem like good service.'

'I understand you not, my lord,' said Quentin Durward; 'all I know is, that my master King Louis sent me to protect these ladies, and that I did so accordingly, to the extent of my ability, both in the journey to Schonwaldt and through the subsequent scenes which took place. I understood the instructions of the King to be honourable, and I executed them honourably; had they

been of a different tenor, they would not have suited one of my name or nation.'

'*Fier comme un Écossois*,' said Charles, who, however disappointed at the tenor of Durward's reply, was not unjust enough to blame him for his boldness. 'But hark thee, archer, what instructions were those which made thee, as some sad fugitives from Schonwaldt have informed us, parade the streets of Liege, at the head of those mutineers who afterwards cruelly murdered their temporal prince and spiritual father? And what harangue was it which thou didst make after that murder was committed, in which you took upon you, as agent for Louis, to assume authority among the villains who had just perpetrated so great a crime?'

'My lord,' said Quentin, 'there are many who could testify that I assumed not the character of an envoy of France in the town of Liege, but had it fixed upon me by the obstinate clamours of the people themselves, who refused to give credit to any disclamation which I could make. This I told to those in the service of the bishop when I had made my escape from the city, and recommended their attention to the security of the castle, which might have prevented the calamity and horror of the succeeding night. It is, no doubt, true that I did, in the extremity of danger, avail myself of the influence which my imputed character gave me, to save the Countess Isabelle, to protect my own life, and, so far as I could, to rein in the humour for slaughter, which had already broke out in so dreadful an instance. I repeat, and will maintain it with my body, that I had no commission of any kind from the King of France respecting the people of Liege, far less instructions to instigate them

to mutiny; and that, finally, when I did avail myself of that imputed character, it was as if I had snatched up a shield to protect myself in a moment of emergency, and used it, as I should surely have done, for the defence of myself and others, without inquiring whether I had a right to the heraldic emblazonments which it displayed.'

'And therein my young companion and prisoner,' said Crèvecœur, unable any longer to remain silent, 'acted with equal spirit and good sense; and his doing so cannot justly be imputed as blame to King Louis.'

There was a murmur of assent among the surrounding nobility which sounded joyfully in the ears of King Louis, whilst it gave no little offence to Charles. He rolled his eyes angrily around; and the sentiments, so generally expressed by so many of his highest vassals and wisest counsellors, would not perhaps have prevented his giving way to his violent and despotic temper, had not Des Comines, who foresaw the danger, prevented it by suddenly announcing a herald from the city of Liege.

'A herald from weavers and nailers?' exclaimed the Duke, 'but admit him instantly. By Our Lady, I will learn from this same herald something further of his employers' hopes and projects than this young French-Scottish man-at-arms seems desirous to tell me!'

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE HERALD

Ariel. —— Hark! they roar.
Prospero. Let them be hunted soundly.

The Tempest.

THERE was room made in the assembly, and no small curiosity evinced by those present to see the herald whom the insurgent Liegeois had ventured to send to so haughty a prince as the Duke of Burgundy, while in such high indignation against them. For it must be remembered that at this period heralds were only despatched from sovereign princes to each other upon solemn occasions; and that the inferior nobility employed pursuivants, a lower rank of officers-at-arms. It may be also noticed in passing, that Louis XI, an habitual derider of whatever did not promise real power or substantial advantage, was in especial a professed contemner of heralds and heraldry, 'red, blue, and green, with all their trumpery,' [1] to which the pride of his rival Charles, which was of a very different kind, attached no small degree of ceremonious importance.

The herald, who was now introduced into the presence of the monarchs, was dressed in a tabard, or coat, embroidered with the arms of his master, in which the boar's head made a distinguished appearance, in blazonry which, in the opinion of the skilful, was more showy than accurate. The rest of his dress — a dress always

[1] For a remarkable instance of this, see Note 19.

sufficiently tawdry — was overcharged with lace, embroidery, and ornament of every kind; and the plume of feathers which he wore was so high as if intended to sweep the roof of the hall. In short, the usual gaudy splendour of the heraldic attire was caricatured and overdone. The boar's head was not only repeated on every part of his dress, but even his bonnet was formed into that shape, and it was represented with gory tongue and bloody tusks, or, in proper language, 'langued and dentated gules'; and there was something in the man's appearance which seemed to imply a mixture of boldness and apprehension, like one who has undertaken a dangerous commission, and is sensible that audacity alone can carry him through it with safety. Something of the same mixture of fear and effrontery was visible in the manner in which he paid his respects, and he showed also a grotesque awkwardness, not usual amongst those who were accustomed to be received in the presence of princes.

'Who art thou, in the devil's name?' was the greeting with which Charles the Bold received this singular envoy.

'I am Rouge Sanglier,' answered the herald, 'the officer-at-arms of William de la Marck, by the grace of God and the election of the chapter Prince Bishop of Liege —'

'Ha!' exclaimed Charles; but, as if subduing his own passion, he made a sign to him to proceed.

'And, in right of his wife, the Honourable Countess Hameline of Croye, Count of Croye and Lord of Bracquemont.'

The utter astonishment of Duke Charles at the ex-

tremity of boldness with which these titles were announced in his presence seemed to strike him dumb; and the herald, conceiving, doubtless, that he had made a suitable impression by the annunciation of his character, proceeded to state his errand.

'*Annuncio vobis gaudium magnum*,' he said; 'I let you, Charles of Burgundy and Earl of Flanders, to know, in my master's name, that under favour of a dispensation of our Holy Father of Rome, presently expected, and appointing a fitting substitute *ad sacra*, he proposes to exercise at once the office of Prince Bishop, and maintain the rights of Count of Croye.'

The Duke of Burgundy, at this and other pauses in the herald's speech, only ejaculated 'Ha!' or some similar interjection, without making any answer; and the tone of exclamation was that of one who, though surprised and moved, is willing to hear all that is to be said ere he commits himself by making an answer. To the further astonishment of all who were present he forbore from his usual abrupt and violent gesticulations, remaining with the nail of his thumb pressed against his teeth, which was his favourite attitude when giving attention, and keeping his eyes bent on the ground as if unwilling to betray the passion which might gleam in them.

The envoy, therefore, proceeded boldly and unabashed in the delivery of his message. 'In the name, therefore, of the Prince Bishop of Liege and Count of Croye, I am to require of you, Duke Charles, to desist from those pretensions and encroachments which you have made on the free and imperial city of Liege, by connivance with the late Louis of Bourbon, unworthy bishop thereof.'

'Ha!' exclaimed the Duke.

'Also to again restore the banners of the community, which you took violently from the town, to the number of six-and-thirty, to rebuild the breaches in their walls, and restore the fortifications which you tyrannically dismantled, and to acknowledge my master, William de la Marck, as Prince Bishop, lawfully elected in a free chapter of canons, of which behold the *procès-verbal*.'

'Have you finished?' said the Duke.

'Not yet,' replied the envoy: 'I am further to require your Grace, on the part of the said right noble and venerable prince, bishop, and count, that you do presently withdraw the garrison from the Castle of Bracquemont, and other places of strength, belonging to the earldom of Croye, which have been placed there, whether in your own most gracious name, or in that of Isabelle, calling herself Countess of Croye, or any other, until it shall be decided by the Imperial Diet whether the fiefs in question shall not pertain to the sister of the late count, my most gracious Lady Hameline, rather than to his daughter, in respect to the *jus emphyteusis*.'

'Your master is most learned,' replied the Duke.

'Yet,' continued the herald, 'the noble and venerable prince and count will be disposed, all other disputes betwixt Burgundy and Liege being settled, to fix upon the Lady Isabelle such an appanage as may become her quality.'

'He is generous and considerate,' said the Duke, in the same tone.

'Now, by a poor fool's conscience,' said Le Glorieux apart to the Count of Crèvecœur, 'I would rather be in

the worst cow's hide that ever died of the murrain than in that fellow's painted coat! The poor man goes on like drunkards, who only look to the other pot, and not to the score which mine host chalks up behind the lattice.'

'Have you yet done?' said the Duke to the herald.

'One word more,' answered Rouge Sanglier, 'from my noble and venerable lord aforesaid, respecting his worthy and trusty ally, the Most Christian King —'

'Ha!' exclaimed the Duke, starting, and in a fiercer tone than he had yet used; but checking himself, he instantly composed himself again to attention.

'Which Most Christian King's royal person it is rumoured that you, Charles of Burgundy, have placed under restraint, contrary to your duty as a vassal of the crown of France, and to the faith observed among Christian sovereigns; for which reason, my said noble and venerable master, by my mouth, charges you to put his Royal and Most Christian ally forthwith at freedom, or to receive the defiance which I am authorised to pronounce to you.'

'Have you yet done?' said the Duke.

'I have,' answered the herald, 'and await your Grace's answer, trusting it may be such as will save the effusion of Christian blood.'

'Now, by St. George of Burgundy —' said the Duke; but ere he could proceed further, Louis arose, and struck in with a tone of so much dignity and authority that Charles could not interrupt him.

'Under your favour, fair cousin of Burgundy,' said the King; 'we ourselves crave priority of voice in replying to this insolent fellow. Sirrah herald, or whatever thou art, carry back notice to the perjured outlaw and

murderer, William de la Marck, that the King of France will be presently before Liege, for the purpose of punishing the sacrilegious murderer of his late beloved kinsman, Louis of Bourbon; and that he proposes to gibbet De la Marck alive, for the insolence of terming himself his ally, and putting his royal name into the mouth of one of his own base messengers.'

'Add whatever else on my part,' said Charles, 'which it may not misbecome a prince to send to a common thief and murderer. And begone! Yet stay. Never herald went from the court of Burgundy without having cause to cry, "Largesse!" Let him be scourged till the bones are laid bare!'

'Nay, but if it please your Grace,' said Crèvecœur and D'Hymbercourt together, 'he is a herald, and so far privileged.'

'It is you, messires,' replied the Duke, 'who are such owls as to think that the tabard makes the herald. I see by that fellow's blazoning he is a mere impostor. Let Toison d'Or step forward, and question him in your presence.'

In spite of his natural effrontery, the envoy of the Wild Boar of Ardennes now became pale, and that notwithstanding some touches of paint with which he had adorned his countenance. Toison d'Or, the chief herald, as we have elsewhere said, of the Duke, and king-at-arms within his dominions, stepped forward with the solemnity of one who knew what was due to his office, and asked his supposed brother in what college he had studied the science which he professed.

'I was bred a pursuivant at the Heraldic College of Ratisbon,' answered Rouge Sanglier, 'and received

the diploma of *ehrenhold* from that same learned fraternity.'

'You could not derive it from a source more worthy,' answered Toison d'Or, bowing still lower than he had done before; 'and if I presume to confer with you on the mysteries of our sublime science, in obedience to the orders of the most gracious Duke, it is not in hopes of giving, but of receiving, knowledge.'

'Go to,' said the Duke, impatiently. 'Leave off ceremony, and ask him some question that may try his skill.'

'It were injustice to ask a disciple of the worthy College of Arms at Ratisbon if he comprehended the common terms of blazonry,' said Toison d'Or; 'but I may, without offence, crave of Rouge Sanglier to say if he is instructed in the more mysterious and secret terms of the science, by which the more learned do emblematically, and as it were parabolically, express to each other what is conveyed to others in the ordinary language, taught in the very accidence as it were of heraldry?'

'I understand one sort of blazonry as well as another,' answered Rouge Sanglier, boldly; 'but it may be we have not the same terms in Germany which you have here in Flanders.'

'Alas, that you will say so!' replied Toison d'Or; 'our noble science, which is indeed the very banner of nobleness and glory of generosity, being the same in all Christian countries, nay, known and acknowledged even by the Saracens and Moors. I would, therefore, pray of you to describe what coat you will after the celestial fashion, that is, by the planets.'

'Blazon it yourself as you will,' said Rouge Sanglier;

'I will do no such apish tricks upon commandment, as an ape is made to come aloft.'

'Show him a coat, and let him blazon it his own way,' said the Duke; 'and if he fails, I promise him that his back shall be gules, azure, and sable.'

'Here,' said the herald of Burgundy, taking from his pouch a piece of parchment, 'is a scroll, in which certain considerations led me to prick down, after my own poor fashion, an ancient coat. I will pray my brother, if indeed he belong to the honourable College of Arms at Ratisbon, to decipher it in fitting language.'

Le Glorieux, who seemed to take great pleasure in this discussion, had by this time bustled himself close up to the two heralds. 'I will help thee, good fellow,' said he to Rouge Sanglier, as he looked hopelessly upon the scroll. 'This, my lords and masters, represents the cat looking out at the dairy-window.'

This sally occasioned a laugh, which was something to the advantage of Rouge Sanglier, as it led Toison d'Or, indignant at the misconstruction of his drawing, to explain it as the coat-of-arms assumed by Childebert, King of France, after he had taken prisoner Gondemar, King of Burgundy; representing an ounce, or tiger-cat, the emblem of the captive prince, behind a grating, or, as Toison d'Or technically defined it, 'Sable, a musion passant or, oppressed with a trellis gules, cloué of the second.'

'By my bauble,' said Le Glorieux, 'if the cat resemble Burgundy, she has the right side of the grating nowadays.'

'True, good fellow,' said Louis, laughing, while the rest of the presence, and even Charles himself, seemed

disconcerted at so broad a jest — 'I owe thee a piece of gold for turning something that looked like sad earnest into the merry game which I trust it will end in.'

'Silence, Le Glorieux,' said the Duke; 'and you, Toison d'Or, who are too learned to be intelligible, stand back; and bring that rascal forward, some of you. Hark ye, villain,' he said, in his harshest tone, 'do you know the difference between argent and or, except in the shape of coined money?'

'For pity's sake, your Grace, be good unto me! Noble King Louis, speak for me!'

'Speak for thyself,' said the Duke. 'In a word, art thou herald or not?'

'Only for this occasion!' acknowledged the detected official.

'Now, by St. George!' said the Duke, eyeing Louis askance, 'we know no king — no gentleman — save *one*, who would have so prostituted the noble science on which royalty and gentry rest, save that king, who sent to Edward of England a serving man disguised as a herald.' [1]

'Such a stratagem,' said Louis, laughing or affecting to laugh, 'could only be justified at a court where no heralds were at the time, and when the emergency was urgent. But, though it might have passed on the blunt and thick-witted islander, no one with brains a whit better than those of a wild boar would have thought of passing such a trick upon the accomplished court of Burgundy.'

'Send him who will,' said the Duke, fiercely, 'he shall return on their hands in poor case. Here! — drag him

[1] See Note 19.

to the market-place — slash him with bridle-reins and dog-whips until the tabard hang about him in tatters! Upon the Rouge Sanglier! — ça, ça! Haloo, haloo!'

Four or five large hounds, such as are painted in the hunting-pieces upon which Rubens and Schneiders laboured in conjunction, caught the well-known notes with which the Duke concluded, and began to yell and bay as if the boar were just roused from his lair.

'By the rood!' said King Louis, observant to catch the vein of his dangerous cousin, 'since the ass has put on the boar's hide, I would set the dogs on him to bait him out of it!'

'Right — right!' exclaimed Duke Charles, the fancy exactly chiming in with his humour at the moment — 'it shall be done! Uncouple the hounds! Hyke a Talbot! hyke a Beaumont! We will course him from the door of the castle to the east gate.'

'I trust your Grace will treat me as a beast of chase,' said the fellow, putting the best face he could upon the matter, 'and allow me fair law?'

'Thou art but vermin,' said the Duke, 'and entitled to no law, by the letter of the book of hunting; nevertheless thou shalt have sixty yards in advance, were it but for the sake of thy unparalleled impudence. Away — away, sirs! we will see this sport.' And the council breaking up tumultuously, all hurried, none faster than the two princes, to enjoy the humane pastime which King Louis had suggested.

The Rouge Sanglier showed excellent sport; for, winged with terror, and having half a score of fierce boar-hounds hard at his haunches, encouraged by the blowing of horns and the woodland cheer of the hunters, he flew

like the very wind, and had he not been encumbered with his herald's coat (the worst possible habit for a runner), he might fairly have escaped dog-free; he also doubled once or twice, in a manner much approved of by the spectators. None of these, nay, not even Charles himself, was so delighted with the sport as King Louis, who, partly from political considerations, and partly as being naturally pleased with the sight of human suffering when ludicrously exhibited, laughed till the tears ran from his eyes, and in his ecstasies of rapture caught hold of the Duke's ermine cloak, as if to support himself; whilst the Duke, no less delighted, flung his arm around the King's shoulder, making thus an exhibition of confidential sympathy and familiarity very much at variance with the terms on which they had so lately stood together.

At length the speed of the pseudo-herald could save him no longer from the fangs of his pursuers: they seized him, pulled him down, and would probably soon have throttled him, had not the Duke called out — 'Stave and tail! — stave and tail! Take them off him! He hath shown so good a course that, though he has made no sport at bay, we will not have him despatched.'

Several officers accordingly busied themselves in taking off the dogs; and they were soon seen coupling some up, and pursuing others which ran through the streets, shaking in sport and triumph the tattered fragments of painted cloth and embroidery rent from the tabard, which the unfortunate wearer had put on in an unlucky hour.

At this moment, and while the Duke was too much engaged with what passed before him to mind what was

said behind him, Oliver le Dain, gliding behind King Louis, whispered into his ear — 'It is the Bohemian, Hayraddin Maugrabin. It were not well he should come to speech of the Duke.'

'He must die,' answered Louis, in the same tone; 'dead men tell no tales.'

One instant afterwards, Tristan l'Hermite, to whom Oliver had given the hint, stepped forward before the King and the Duke, and said, in his blunt manner, 'So please your Majesty and your Grace, this piece of game is mine, and I claim him; he is marked with my stamp; the *fleur-de-lys* is branded on his shoulder, as all men may see. He is a known villain, and hath slain the King's subjects, robbed churches, deflowered virgins, slain deer in the royal parks —'

'Enough — enough,' said Duke Charles; 'he is my royal cousin's property by many a good title. What will your Majesty do with him?'

'If he is left to my disposal,' said the King, 'I will at least give him one lesson in the science of heraldry, in which he is so ignorant — only explain to him practically the meaning of a cross *potence*, with a noose dangling proper.'

'Not as to be by him borne, but as to bear him. Let him take the degrees under your gossip Tristan; he is a deep professor in such mysteries.'

Thus answered the Duke, with a burst of discordant laughter at his own wit, which was so cordially chorussed by Louis that his rival could not help looking kindly at him, while he said —

'Ah, Louis — Louis! would to God thou wert as faithful a monarch as thou art a merry companion! I cannot

but think often on the jovial time we used to spend together.'

'You may bring it back when you will,' said Louis: 'I will grant you as fair terms as for very shame's sake you ought to ask in my present condition, without making yourself the fable of Christendom; and I will swear to observe them upon the holy relique, which I have ever the grace to bear about my person, being a fragment of the true cross.'

Here he took a small golden reliquary, which was suspended from his neck next to his shirt by a chain of the same metal, and having kissed it devoutly, continued —

'Never was false oath sworn on this most sacred relique but it was avenged within the year.'

'Yet,' said the Duke, 'it was the same on which you swore amity to me when you left Burgundy, and shortly after sent the Bastard of Rubempré to murder or kidnap me.'

'Nay, gracious cousin, now you are ripping up ancient grievances,' said the King; 'I promise you that you were deceived in that matter. Moreover, it was not upon *this* relique which I then swore, but upon another fragment of the true cross which I got from the Grand Seignior, weakened in virtue, doubtless, by sojourning with infidels. Besides, did not the war of the "public good" break out within the year; and was not a Burgundian army encamped at St. Denis, backed by all the great feudatories of France; and was I not obliged to yield up Normandy to my brother? O God, shield us from perjury on such a warrant as this!'

'Well, cousin,' answered the Duke, 'I do believe thou

hadst a lesson to keep faith another time. And now for once, without finesse and doubling, will you make good your promise, and go with me to punish this murdering La Marck and the Liegeois?'

'I will march against them,' said Louis, 'with the ban and arrière-ban of France, and the oriflamme displayed.'

'Nay — nay,' said the Duke, 'that is more than is needful, or maybe advisable. The presence of your Scottish Guard and two hundred choice lances will serve to show that you are a free agent. A large army might—'

'Make me so in effect, you would say, my fair cousin?' said the King. 'Well, you shall dictate the numbers of my attendants.'

'And to put this fair cause of mischief out of the way, you will agree to the Countess Isabelle of Croye wedding with the Duke of Orleans?'

'Fair cousin,' said the King, 'you drive my courtesy to extremity. The duke is the betrothed bridegroom of my daughter Joan. Be generous — yield up this matter, and let us speak rather of the towns on the Somme.'

'My council will talk to your Majesty of these,' said Charles; 'I myself have less at heart the acquisition of territory than the redress of injuries. You have tampered with my vassals, and your royal pleasure must needs dispose of the hand of a ward of Burgundy. Your Majesty must bestow it within the pale of your own royal family, since you have meddled with it; otherwise, our conference breaks off.'

'Were I to say I did this willingly,' said the King, 'no one would believe me; therefore do you, my fair cousin, judge of the extent of my wish to oblige you when I say, most reluctantly, that the parties consenting, and a dis-

pensation from the Pope being obtained, my own objections shall be no bar to this match which you propose.'

'All besides can be easily settled by our ministers,' said the Duke, 'and we are once more cousins and friends.'

'May Heaven be praised!' said Louis, 'who, holding in His hand the hearts of princes, doth mercifully incline them to peace and clemency, and prevent the effusion of human blood. Oliver,' he added apart to that favourite who ever waited around him like the familiar beside a sorcerer, 'hark thee — tell Tristan to be speedy in dealing with yonder runagate Bohemian.'

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE EXECUTION

I'll take thee to the good green wood,
And make thine own hand choose the tree.

Old Ballad.

'Now God be praised that gave us the power of laughing and making others laugh, and shame to the dull cur who scorns the office of a jester! Here is a joke, and that none of the brightest, though it may pass, since it has amused two princes, which hath gone farther than a thousand reasons of state to prevent a war between France and Burgundy.'

Such was the inference of Le Glorieux when, in consequence of the reconciliation of which we gave the particulars in the last chapter, the Burgundian guards were withdrawn from the Castle of Péronne, the abode of the King removed from the ominous Tower of Count Herbert, and, to the great joy both of French and Burgundians, an outward show at least of confidence and friendship seemed so established between Duke Charles and his liege lord. Yet still the latter, though treated with ceremonial observance, was sufficiently aware that he continued to be the object of suspicion, though he prudently affected to overlook it, and appeared to consider himself as entirely at his ease.

Meanwhile, as frequently happens in such cases, whilst the principal parties concerned had so far made up their differences, one of the subaltern agents concerned in

their intrigues was bitterly experiencing the truth of the political maxim, that if the great have frequent need of base tools, they make amends to society by abandoning them to their fate so soon as they find them no longer useful.

This was Hayraddin Maugrabin, who, surrendered by the Duke's officers to the King's provost-marshal, was by him placed in the hands of his two trusty aides-de-camp, Trois-Eschelles and Petit-André, to be despatched without loss of time. One on either side of him, and followed by a few guards and a multitude of rabble — this playing the *allegro*, that the *penseroso* — he was marched off (to use a modern comparison, like Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy) to the neighbouring forest; where, to save all further trouble and ceremonial of a gibbet and so forth, the disposers of his fate proposed to knit him up to the first sufficient tree.

They were not long in finding an oak, as Petit-André facetiously expressed it, fit to bear such an acorn; and placing the wretched criminal on a bank, under a sufficient guard, they began their extemporaneous preparations for the final catastrophe. At the moment Hayraddin, gazing on the crowd, encountered the eyes of Quentin Durward, who, thinking he recognised the countenance of his faithless guide in that of the detected impostor, had followed with the crowd to witness the execution, and assure himself of the identity.

When the executioners informed him that all was ready, Hayraddin, with much calmness, asked a single boon at their hands.

'Anything, my son, consistent with our office,' said Trois-Eschelles.

'That is,' said Hayraddin, 'anything but my life.'

'Even so,' said Trois-Eschelles, 'and something more; for as you seem resolved to do credit to our mystery, and die like a man, without making wry mouths — why, though our orders are to be prompt, I care not if I indulge you ten minutes longer.'

'You are even too generous,' said Hayraddin.

'Truly we may be blamed for it,' said Petit-André; 'but what of that? I could consent almost to give my life for such a jerry-come-tumble, such a smart, tight, firm lad, who proposes to come from aloft with a grace, as an honest fellow should do.'

'So that if you want a confessor,' said Trois-Eschelles—

'Or a *lire* of wine,' said his facetious companion —

'Or a psalm,' said Tragedy —

'Or a song,' said Comedy —

'Neither, my good, kind, and most expeditious friends,' said the Bohemian; 'I only pray to speak a few minutes with yonder archer of the Scottish Guard.'

The executioners hesitated a moment; but Trois-Eschelles recollecting that Quentin Durward was believed, from various circumstances, to stand high in the favour of their master, King Louis, they resolved to permit the interview.

When Quentin, at their summons, approached the condemned criminal, he could not but be shocked at his appearance, however justly his doom might have been deserved. The remnants of his heraldic finery, rent to tatters by the fangs of the dogs, and the clutches of the bipeds who had rescued him from their fury to lead him to the gallows, gave him at once a ludicrous and a wretched appearance. His face was discoloured with

paint, and with some remnants of a fictitious beard, assumed for the purpose of disguise, and there was the paleness of death upon his cheek and upon his lip; yet, strong in passive courage, like most of his tribe, his eye, while it glistened and wandered, as well as the contorted smile of his mouth, seemed to bid defiance to the death he was about to die.

Quentin was struck partly with horror, partly with compassion, as he approached the miserable man, and these feelings probably betrayed themselves in his manner, for Petit-André called out, 'Trip it more smartly, jolly archer; this gentleman's leisure cannot wait for you, if you walk as if the pebbles were eggs, and you afraid of breaking them.'

'I must speak with him in privacy,' said the criminal, despair seeming to croak in his accent as he uttered the words.

'That may hardly consist with our office, my merry leap-the-ladder,' said Petit-André; 'we know you for a slippery eel of old.'

'I am tied with your horse-girths, hand and foot,' said the criminal. 'You may keep guard around me, though out of earshot; the archer is your own King's servant. And if I give you ten guilders —'

'Laid out in masses, the sum may profit his poor soul,' said Trois-Eschelles.

'Laid out in wine or *brantwein*, it will comfort my poor body,' responded Petit-André. 'So let them be forthcoming, my little crack-rope.'

'Pay the blood-hounds their fee,' said Hayraddin to Durward; 'I was plundered of every stiver when they took me; it shall avail thee much.'

Quentin paid the executioners their guerdon, and, like men of promise, they retreated out of hearing — keeping, however, a careful eye on the criminal's motions. After waiting an instant till the unhappy man should speak, as he still remained silent, Quentin at length addressed him, 'And to this conclusion thou hast at length arrived?'

'Ay,' answered Hayraddin, 'it required neither astrologer, nor physiognomist, nor chiromantist, to foretell that I should follow the destiny of my family.'

'Brought to this early end by thy long course of crime and treachery!' said the Scot.

'No, by the bright Aldebaran and all his brother twinklers!' answered the Bohemian. 'I am brought hither by my folly, in believing that the bloodthirsty cruelty of a Frank could be restrained even by what they themselves profess to hold most sacred. A priest's vestment would have been no safer garb for me than a herald's tabard, however sanctimonious are your professions of devotion and chivalry.'

'A detected impostor has no right to claim the immunities of the disguise he had usurped,' said Durward.

'Detected!' said the Bohemian. 'My jargon was as good as yonder old fool of a herald's; but let it pass. As well now as hereafter.'

'You abuse time,' said Quentin. 'If you have aught to tell me, say it quickly, and then take some care of your soul.'

'Of my soul!' said the Bohemian, with a hideous laugh. 'Think ye a leprosy of twenty years can be cured in an instant? If I have a soul, it hath been in such a course since I was ten years old and more, that it would

take me one month to recall all my crimes, and another to tell them to the priest; and were such space granted me, it is five to one I would employ it otherwise.'

'Hardened wretch, blaspheme not! Tell me what thou hast to say, and I leave thee to thy fate,' said Durward, with mingled pity and horror.

'I have a boon to ask,' said Hayraddin, 'but first I will buy it of you; for your tribe, with all their professions of charity, give nought for nought.'

'I could wellnigh say "Thy gifts perish with thee,"' answered Quentin, 'but that thou art on the very verge of eternity. Ask thy boon; reserve thy bounty, it can do me no good. I remember enough of your good offices of old.'

'Why, I loved you,' said Hayraddin, 'for the matter that chanced on the banks of the Cher; and I would have helped you to a wealthy dame. You wore her scarf, which partly misled me; and indeed I thought that Hameline, with her portable wealth, was more for your market-penny than the other hensparrow, with her old roost at Bracquemont, which Charles has clutched, and is likely to keep his claws upon.'

'Talk not so idly, unhappy man,' said Quentin; 'yonder officers become impatient.'

'Give them ten guilders for ten minutes more,' said the culprit, who, like most in his situation, mixed with his hardihood a desire of procrastinating his fate; 'I tell thee it shall avail thee much.'

'Use then well the minutes so purchased,' said Durward, and easily made a new bargain with the marshalsmen.

This done, Hayraddin continued: 'Yes, I assure you I

meant you well; and Hameline would have proved an easy and convenient spouse. Why, she has reconciled herself even with the Boar of Ardennes, though his mode of wooing was somewhat of the roughest, and lords it yonder in his sty, as if she had fed on mast-husks and acorns all her life.'

'Cease this brutal and untimely jesting,' said Quentin, 'or, once more I tell you, I will leave you to your fate.'

'You are right,' said Hayraddin, after a moment's pause; 'what cannot be postponed must be faced! Well, know then, I came hither in this accursed disguise, moved by a great reward from De la Marck, and hoping a yet mightier one from King Louis, not merely to bear the message of defiance which you may have heard of, but to tell the King an important secret.'

'It was a fearful risk,' said Durward.

'It was paid for as such, and such it hath proved,' answered the Bohemian. 'De la Marck attempted before to communicate with Louis by means of Marthon; but she could not, it seems, approach nearer to him than the astrologer, to whom she told all the passages of the journey, and of Schonwaldt; but it is a chance if her tidings ever reach Louis, except in the shape of a prophecy. But hear my secret, which is more important than aught she could tell. William de la Marck has assembled a numerous and strong force within the city of Liege, and augments it daily by means of the old priest's treasures. But he proposes not to hazard a battle with the chivalry of Burgundy, and still less to stand a siege in the dismantled town. This he will do: he will suffer the hot-brained Charles to sit down before the place without

opposition, and in the night, make an outfall or sally upon the leaguer with his whole force. Many he will have in French armour, who will cry "France," "St. Louis," and "Denis Montjoye," as if there were a strong body of French auxiliaries in the city. This cannot choose but strike utter confusion among the Burgundians; and if King Louis, with his guards, attendants, and such soldiers as he may have with him, shall second his efforts, the Boar of Ardennes nothing doubts the discomfiture of the whole Burgundian army. There is my secret, and I bequeath it to you. Forward, or prevent the enterprise — sell the intelligence to King Louis or to Duke Charles, I care not. Save or destroy whom thou wilt; for my part, I only grieve that I cannot spring it like a mine, to the destruction of them all!'

'It is indeed an important secret,' said Quentin, instantly comprehending how easily the national jealousy might be awakened in a camp consisting partly of French, partly of Burgundians.

'Ay, so it is,' answered Hayraddin; 'and, now you have it, you would fain begone, and leave me without granting the boon for which I have paid beforehand.'

'Tell me thy request,' said Quentin; 'I will grant it if it be in my power.'

'Nay, it is no mighty demand: it is only in behalf of poor Klepper, my palfrey, the only living thing that may miss me. A due mile south you will find him feeding by a deserted collier's hut; whistle to him thus (he whistled a peculiar note), and call him by his name, Klepper, he will come to you; here is his bridle under my gaberdine — it is lucky the hounds got it not, for he

obeys no other. Take him, and make much of him, I do not say for his master's sake, but because I have placed at your disposal the event of a mighty war. He will never fail you at need; night and day, rough and smooth, fair and foul, warm stables and the winter sky, are the same to Klepper; had I cleared the gates of Péronne, and got so far as where I left him, I had not been in this case. Will you be kind to Klepper?'

'I swear to you that I will,' answered Quentin, affected by what seemed a trait of tenderness in a character so hardened.

'Then fare thee well!' said the criminal. 'Yet stay — stay; I would not willingly die in discourtesy, forgetting a lady's commission. This billet is from the very gracious and extremely silly Lady of the Wild Boar of Ardennes to her black-eyed niece — I see by your look I have chosen a willing messenger. And one word more — I forgot to say, that in the stuffing of my saddle you will find a rich purse of gold pieces, for the sake of which I put my life on the venture which has cost me so dear. Take them, and replace a hundredfold the guilders you have bestowed on these bloody slaves. I make you mine heir.'

'I will bestow them in good works, and masses for the benefit of thy soul,' said Quentin.

'Name not that word again,' said Hayraddin, his countenance assuming a dreadful expression; 'there is — there can be — there shall be — no such thing! it is a dream of priestcraft!'

'Unhappy — most unhappy being! Think better! Let me speed for a priest; these men will delay yet a little longer, I will bribe them to it,' said Quentin. 'What

canst thou expect, dying in such opinions, and impenitent?'

'To be resolved into the elements,' said the hardened atheist, pressing his fettered arms against his bosom; 'my hope, my trust, and expectation is, that the mysterious frame of humanity shall melt into the general mass of nature, to be recompounded in the other forms with which she daily supplies those which daily disappear, and return under different forms — the watery particles to streams and showers, the earthly parts to enrich their mother earth, the airy portions to wanton in the breeze, and those of fire to supply the blaze of Aldebaran and his brethren. In this faith have I lived, and I will die in it! Hence! begone! disturb me no further! I have spoken the last word that mortal ears shall listen to!'

Deeply impressed with the horrors of his condition, Quentin Durward yet saw that it was vain to hope to awaken him to a sense of his fearful state. He bid him, therefore, farewell; to which the criminal only replied by a short and sullen nod, as one who, plunged in reverie, bids adieu to company which distracts his thoughts. He bent his course towards the forest, and easily found where Klepper was feeding. The creature came at his call, but was for some time unwilling to be caught, snuffing and starting when the stranger approached him. At length, however, Quentin's general acquaintance with the habits of the animal, and perhaps some particular knowledge of those of Klepper, which he had often admired while Hayraddin and he travelled together, enabled him to take possession of the Bohemian's dying bequest. Long ere he returned to Péronne, the Bohem-

ian had gone where the vanity of his dreadful creed was to be put to the final issue — a fearful experience for one who had neither expressed remorse for the past nor apprehension for the future!

CHAPTER XXXV

A PRIZE FOR HONOUR

'T is brave for beauty when the best blade wins her.
The Count Palatine.

WHEN Quentin Durward reached Péronne, a council was sitting, in the issue of which he was interested more deeply than he could have apprehended, and which, though held by persons of a rank with whom one of his could scarce be supposed to have community of interest, had nevertheless the most extraordinary influence on his fortunes.

King Louis, who, after the interlude of De la Marck's envoy, had omitted no opportunity to cultivate the returning interest which that circumstance had given him in the Duke's opinion, had been engaged in consulting him, or, it might be almost said, receiving his opinion, upon the number and quality of the troops, by whom, as auxiliary to the Duke of Burgundy, he was to be attended in their joint expedition against Liege. He plainly saw the wish of Charles was to call into his camp such Frenchmen as, from their small number and high quality, might be considered rather as hostages than as auxiliaries; but, observant of Crèvecœur's advice, he assented as readily to whatever the Duke proposed as if it had arisen from the free impulse of his own mind.

The King failed not, however, to indemnify himself for his complaisance by the indulgence of his vindictive

temper against Balue, whose counsels had led him to repose such exuberant trust in the Duke of Burgundy. Tristan, who bore the summons for moving up his auxiliary forces, had the further commission to carry the cardinal to the Castle of Loches, and there shut him up in one of those iron cages which he himself is said to have invented.

'Let him make proof of his own devices,' said the King; 'he is a man of holy church — we may not shed his blood; but, *Pasques-dieu!* his bishopric, for ten years to come, shall have an impregnable frontier to make up for its small extent! And see the troops are brought up instantly.'

Perhaps, by this prompt acquiescence, Louis hoped to evade the more unpleasing condition with which the Duke had clogged their reconciliation. But if he so hoped, he greatly mistook the temper of his cousin; for never man lived more tenacious of his purpose than Charles of Burgundy, and least of all was he willing to relax any stipulation which he had made in resentment, or revenge, of a supposed injury.

No sooner were the necessary expresses despatched to summon up the forces who were selected to act as auxiliaries than Louis was called upon by his host to give public consent to the espousals of the Duke of Orleans and Isabelle of Croye. The King complied with a heavy sigh, and presently after urged a slight expostulation, founded upon the necessity of observing the wishes of the duke himself.

'These have not been neglected,' said the Duke of Burgundy: 'Crèvecœur hath communicated with Monsieur d'Orleans, and finds him — strange to say — so

dead to the honour of wedding a royal bride, that he acceded to the proposal of marrying the Countess of Croye as the kindest proposal which father could have made to him.'

'He is the more ungracious and thankless,' said Louis; 'but the whole shall be as you, my cousin, will, if you can bring it about with consent of the parties themselves.'

'Fear not that,' said the Duke; and accordingly, not many minutes after the affair had been proposed, the Duke of Orleans and the Countess of Croye, the latter attended, as on the preceding occasion, by the Countess of Crèvecœur and the abbess of the Ursulines, were summoned to the presence of the princes, and heard from the mouth of Charles of Burgundy, unobjected to by that of Louis, who sat in silent and moody consciousness of diminished consequence, that the union of their hands was designed by the wisdom of both princes, to confirm the perpetual alliance which in future should take place betwixt France and Burgundy.

The Duke of Orleans had much difficulty in suppressing the joy which he felt upon the proposal, and which delicacy rendered improper in the presence of Louis; and it required his habitual awe of that monarch to enable him to rein in his delight, so much as merely to reply, 'that his duty compelled him to place his choice at the disposal of his sovereign.'

'Fair cousin of Orleans,' said Louis, with sullen gravity, 'since I must speak on so unpleasant an occasion, it is needless for me to remind you that my sense of your merits had led me to propose for you a match into my own family. But, since my cousin of Burgundy thinks

that the disposing of your hand otherwise is the surest pledge of amity between his dominions and mine, I love both too well not to sacrifice to them my own hopes and wishes.'

The Duke of Orleans threw himself on his knees, and kissed, — and, for once, with sincerity of attachment, — the hand which the King, with averted countenance, extended to him. In fact he, as well as most present, saw, in the unwilling acquiescence of this accomplished dissembler, who, even with that very purpose, had suffered his reluctance to be visible, a king relinquishing his favourite project, and subjugating his paternal feelings to the necessities of state and interest of his country. Even Burgundy was moved, and Orleans' heart smote him for the joy which he involuntarily felt on being freed from his engagement with the Princess Joan. If he had known how deeply the King was cursing him in his soul, and what thoughts of future revenge he was agitating, it is probable his own delicacy on the occasion would not have been so much hurt.

Charles next turned to the young countess, and bluntly announced the proposed match to her, as a matter which neither admitted delay nor hesitation; adding, at the same time, that it was but a too favourable consequence of her intractability on a former occasion.

'My Lord Duke and Sovereign,' said Isabelle, summoning up all her courage, 'I observe your Grace's commands, and submit to them.'

'Enough, enough,' said the Duke, interrupting her, 'we will arrange the rest. Your Majesty,' he continued, addressing King Louis, 'hath had a boar's hunt in the

morning; what say you to rousing a wolf in the afternoon?'

The young countess saw the necessity of decision. 'Your Grace mistakes my meaning,' she said, speaking, though timidly, yet loudly and decidedly enough to compel the Duke's attention, which, from some consciousness, he would otherwise have willingly denied to her. 'My submission,' she said, 'only respected those lands and estates which your Grace's ancestors gave to mine, and which I resign to the house of Burgundy if my sovereign thinks my disobedience in this matter renders me unworthy to hold them.'

'Ha! St. George!' said the Duke, stamping furiously on the ground, 'does the fool know in what presence she is, and to whom she speaks?'

'My lord,' she replied, still undismayed, 'I am before my suzerain, and, I trust, a just one. If you deprive me of my lands, you take away all that your ancestors' generosity gave, and you break the only bonds which attach us together. You gave not this poor and persecuted form, still less the spirit which animates me. And these it is my purpose to dedicate to Heaven in the convent of the Ursulines, under the guidance of this holy mother abbess.'

The rage and astonishment of the Duke can hardly be conceived, unless we could estimate the surprise of a falcon against whom a dove should ruffle its pinions in defiance. 'Will the holy mother receive you without an appanage?' he said, in a voice of scorn.

'If she doth her convent, in the first instance, so much wrong,' said the Lady Isabelle, 'I trust there is charity enough among the noble friends of my house to make up some support for the orphan of Croye.'

'It is false!' said the Duke; 'it is a base pretext to cover some secret and unworthy passion. My Lord of Orleans, she shall be yours, if I drag her to the altar with my own hands!'

The Countess of Crèvecœur, a high-spirited woman, and confident in her husband's merits and his favour with the Duke, could keep silent no longer. 'My lord,' she said, 'your passions transport you into language utterly unworthy. The hand of no gentlewoman can be disposed of by force.'

'And it is no part of the duty of a Christian prince,' added the abbess, 'to thwart the wishes of a pious soul, who, broken with the cares and persecutions of the world, is desirous to become the bride of Heaven.'

'Neither can my cousin of Orleans,' said Dunois, 'with honour accept a proposal to which the lady has thus publicly stated her objections.'

'If I were permitted,' said Orleans, on whose facile mind Isabelle's beauty had made a deep impression, 'some time to endeavour to place my pretensions before the countess in a more favourable light —'

'My lord,' said Isabelle, whose firmness was now fully supported by the encouragement which she received from all around, 'it were to no purpose: my mind is made up to decline this alliance, though far above my deserts.'

'Nor have I time,' said the Duke, 'to wait till these whimsies are changed with the next change of the moon. Monseigneur d'Orleans, she shall learn within this hour that obedience becomes matter of necessity.'

'Not in my behalf, sire,' answered the prince, who felt that he could not, with any show of honour, avail himself of the Duke's obstinate disposition; 'to have been

once openly and positively refused is enough for a son of France. He cannot prosecute his addresses further.'

The Duke darted one furious glance at Orleans, another at Louis; and reading in the countenance of the latter, in spite of his utmost efforts to suppress his feelings, a look of secret triumph, he became outrageous.

'Write,' he said to the secretary, 'our doom of forfeiture and imprisonment against this disobedient and insolent minion. She shall to the *zuchthaus*, to the penitentiary, to herd with those whose lives have rendered them her rivals in effrontery!'

There was a general murmur.

'My lord Duke,' said the Count of Crèvecœur, taking the word for the rest, 'this must be better thought on. We, your faithful vassals, cannot suffer such a dishonour to the nobility and chivalry of Burgundy. If the countess hath done amiss, let her be punished, but in the manner that becomes her rank and ours, who stand connected with her house by blood and alliance.'

The Duke paused a moment, and looked full at his counsellor with the stare of a bull which, when compelled by the neat-herd from the road which he wishes to go, deliberates with himself whether to obey or to rush on his driver and toss him into the air.

Prudence, however, prevailed over fury; he saw the sentiment was general in his council, was afraid of the advantages which Louis might derive from seeing dissension among his vassals; and probably, for he was rather of a coarse and violent than of a malignant temper, felt ashamed of his own dishonourable proposal.

'You are right,' he said, 'Crèvecœur, and I spoke hastily. Her fate shall be determined according to the

rules of chivalry. Her flight to Liege hath given the signal for the bishop's murder. He that best avenges that deed, and brings us the head of the Wild Boar of Ardennes, shall claim her hand of us; and if she denies his right, we can at least grant him her fiefs, leaving it to his generosity to allow her what means he will to retire into a convent.'

'Nay!' said the countess, 'think I am the daughter of Count Reinold — of your father's old, valiant, and faithful servant. Would you hold me out as a prize to the best sword-player?'

'Your ancestress,' said the Duke, 'was won at a tourney; you shall be fought for in real *mêlée*. Only thus far, for Count Reinold's sake, the successful prizer shall be a gentleman, of unimpeached birth and unstained bearings; but, be he such, and the poorest who ever drew the strap of a sword-belt through the tongue of a buckle, he shall have at least the proffer of your hand. I swear it, by St. George, by my ducal crown, and by the order that I wear! Ha! messires,' he added, turning to the nobles present, 'this at least is, I think, in conformity with the rules of chivalry?'

Isabelle's remonstrances were drowned in a general and jubilant assent, above which was heard the voice of old Lord Crawford, regretting the weight of years that prevented his striking for so fair a prize. The Duke was gratified by the general applause, and his temper began to flow more smoothly, like that of a swollen river when it hath subsided within its natural boundaries.

'Are we, to whom fate has given dames already,' said Crèvecœur, 'to be bystanders at this fair game? It does not consist with my honour to be so, for I have myself

a vow to be paid at the expense of that tusked and bristled brute, De la Marck.'

'Strike boldly in, Crèvecœur,' said the Duke; 'win her, and since thou canst not wear her thyself, bestow her where thou wilt — on Count Stephen, your nephew, if you list.'

'Gramercy, my lord!' said Crèvecœur, 'I will do my best in the battle; and, should I be fortunate enough to be foremost, Stephen shall try his eloquence against that of the lady abbess.'

'I trust,' said Dunois, 'that the chivalry of France are not excluded from this fair contest?'

'Heaven forbid! brave Dunois,' answered the Duke, 'were it but for the sake of seeing you do your uttermost. But,' he added, 'though there be no fault in the Lady Isabelle wedding a Frenchman, it will be necessary that the Count of Croye must become a subject of Burgundy.'

'Enough, enough,' said Dunois, 'my bar sinister may never be surmounted by the coronet of Croye: I will live and die French. But yet, though I should lose the lands, I will strike a blow for the lady.'

Le Balafré dared not speak aloud in such a presence, but he muttered to himself — 'Now, Saunders Souple-jaw, hold thine own! Thou always saidst the fortune of our house was to be won by marriage, and never had you such a chance to keep your word with us.'

'No one thinks of me,' said Le Glorieux, 'who am sure to carry off the prize from all of you.'

'Right, my sapient friend,' said Louis; 'when a woman is in the case, the greatest fool is ever the first in favour.'

While the princes and their nobles thus jested over her fate, the abbess and the Countess of Crèvecœur en-

deavoured in vain to console Isabelle, who had withdrawn with them from the council-presence. The former assured her, that the Holy Virgin would frown on every attempt to withdraw a true votaress from the shrine of Saint Ursula; while the Countess of Crèvecœur whispered more temporal consolation, that no true knight, who might succeed in the emprize proposed, would avail himself, against her inclinations, of the Duke's award; and that perhaps the successful competitor might prove one who should find such favour in her eyes as to reconcile her to obedience. Love, like despair, catches at straws; and, faint and vague as was the hope which this insinuation conveyed, the tears of the Countess Isabelle flowed more placidly while she dwelt upon it.[1]

[1] See Note 20.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE SALLY

The wretch condemn'd with life to part
Still, still on hope relies,
And every pang that rends the heart
Bids expectation rise.

Hope, like the gleaming taper's light,
Adorns and cheers our way,
And still, as darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray.

GOLDSMITH.

FEW days had passed ere Louis had received, with a smile of gratified vengeance, the intelligence that his favourite and his counsellor, the Cardinal Balue, was groaning within a cage of iron, so disposed as scarce to permit him to enjoy repose in any posture except when recumbent; and of which, be it said in passing, he remained the unpitied tenant for nearly twelve years. The auxiliary forces which the Duke had required Louis to bring up had also appeared; and he comforted himself that their numbers were sufficient to protect his person against violence, although too limited to cope, had such been his purpose, with the large army of Burgundy. He saw himself also at liberty, when time should suit, to resume his project of marriage between his daughter and the Duke of Orleans; and, although he was sensible to the indignity of serving with his noblest peers under the banners of his own vassal, and against the people whose cause he had abetted, he did not allow these circumstances to embarrass him in the meantime, trusting

that a future day would bring him amends. 'For chance,' said he to his trusty Oliver, 'may indeed gain one hit, but it is patience and wisdom which win the game at last.'

With such sentiments, upon a beautiful day in the latter end of harvest, the King mounted his horse; and indifferent that he was looked upon rather as a part of the pageant of a victor than in the light of an independent sovereign surrounded by his guards and his chivalry, King Louis sallied from under the Gothic gateway of Péronne to join the Burgundian army, which commenced at the same time its march against Liege.

Most of the ladies of distinction who were in the place attended, dressed in their best array, upon the battlements and defences of the gate, to see the gallant show of the warriors setting forth on the expedition. Thither had the Countess Crèvecœur brought the Countess Isabelle. The latter attended very reluctantly; but the peremptory order of Charles had been, that she who was to bestow the palm in the tourney, should be visible to the knights who were about to enter the lists.

As they thronged out from under the arch, many a pennon and shield was to be seen, graced with fresh devices, expressive of the bearer's devoted resolution to become a competitor for a prize so fair. Here a charger was painted starting for the goal, there an arrow aimed at a mark; one knight bore a bleeding heart, indicative of his passion, another a skull and a coronet of laurels, showing his determination to win or die. Many others there were; and some so cunningly intricate and obscure, that they might have defied the most ingenious interpreter. Each knight, too, it may be presumed, put his courser to his mettle, and assumed his most gallant seat

in the saddle, as he passed for a moment under the view of the fair bevy of dames and damsels, who encouraged their valour by their smiles, and the waving of kerchiefs and of veils. The Archer Guard, selected almost at will from the flower of the Scottish nation, drew general applause, from the gallantry and splendour of their appearance.

And there was one among these strangers who ventured on a demonstration of acquaintance with the Lady Isabelle which had not been attempted even by the most noble of the French nobility. It was Quentin Durward, who, as he passed the ladies in his rank, presented to the Countess of Croye, on the point of his lance, the letter of her aunt.

'Now, by my honour,' said the Count of Crèvecœur, 'that is over insolent in an unworthy adventurer!'

'Do not call him so, Crèvecœur,' said Dunois; 'I have good reason to bear testimony to his gallantry, and in behalf of that lady, too.'

'You make words of nothing,' said Isabelle, blushing with shame, and partly with resentment; 'it is a letter from my unfortunate aunt: she writes cheerfully, though her situation must be dreadful.'

'Let us hear — let us hear what says the Boar's bride,' said Crévecœur.

The Countess Isabelle read the letter, in which her aunt seemed determined to make the best of a bad bargain, and to console herself for the haste and indecorum of her nuptials by the happiness of being wedded to one of the bravest men of the age, who had just acquired a princedom by his valour. She implored her niece not to judge of her William, as she called him, by the report

of others, but to wait till she knew him personally. He had his faults, perhaps, but they were such as belonged to characters whom she had ever venerated. William was rather addicted to wine, but so was the gallant Sir Godfrey, her grandsire; he was something hasty and sanguinary in his temper, such had been her brother, Reinold of blessed memory; he was blunt in speech, few Germans were otherwise; and a little wilful and peremptory, but she believed all men loved to rule. More there was to the same purpose; and the whole concluded with the hope and request that Isabelle would, by means of the bearer, endeavour her escape from the tyrant of Burgundy, and come to her loving kinswoman's court of Liege, where any little differences concerning their mutual rights of succession to the earldom might be adjusted by Isabelle's marrying Carl Eberson — a bridegroom younger indeed than his bride, but that, as she (the Lady Hameline) might perhaps say from experience, was an inequality more easy to be endured than Isabelle could be aware of.[1]

Here the Countess Isabelle stopped; the abbess observing, with a prim aspect, that she had read quite enough concerning such worldly vanities, and the Count of Crèvecœur breaking out, 'Aroint thee, deceitful witch! Why, this device smells rank as the toasted cheese in a rat-trap. Now fie, and double fie, upon the old decoy-duck!'

The Countess of Crèvecœur gravely rebuked her husband for his violence. 'The Lady Hameline,' she said, 'must have been deceived by De la Marck with a show of courtesy.'

[1] See Note 21.

'He show courtesy!' said the count; 'I acquit him of all such dissimulation. You may as well expect courtesy from a literal wild boar; you may as well try to lay leaf-gold on old rusty gibbet-irons. No — idiot as she is, she is not quite goose enough to fall in love with the fox who has snapped her, and that in his very den. But you women are all alike — fair words carry it; and, I dare say, here is my pretty cousin impatient to join her aunt in this fool's paradise, and marry the Boar Pig.'

'So far from being capable of such folly,' said Isabelle, 'I am doubly desirous of vengeance on the murderers of the excellent bishop, because it will, at the same time, free my aunt from the villain's power.'

'Ah! there indeed spoke the voice of Croye!' exclaimed the count; and no more was said concerning the letter.

But while Isabelle read her aunt's epistle to her friends, it must be observed that she did not think it necessary to recite a certain *postscript*, in which the Countess Hameline, lady-like, gave an account of her occupations, and informed her niece that she had laid aside for the present a surcoat which she was working for her husband, bearing the arms of Croye and La Marck in conjugal fashion, parted per pale, because her William had determined, for purposes of policy, in the first action to have others dressed in his coat-armour, and himself to assume the arms of Orleans, with a bar sinister — in other words, those of Dunois. There was also a slip of paper in another hand, the contents of which the countess did not think it necessary to mention, being simply these words: 'If you hear not of me soon, and that by the trumpet of Fame, conclude me dead, but not unworthy.'

A thought, hitherto repelled as wildly incredible, now glanced with double keenness through Isabelle's soul. As female wit seldom fails in the contrivance of means, she so ordered it, that ere the troops were fully on march, Quentin Durward received from an unknown hand the billet of Lady Hameline, marked with three crosses opposite to the postscript, and having these words subjoined: 'He who feared not the arms of Orleans when on the breast of their gallant owner cannot dread them when displayed on that of a tyrant and murderer.' A thousand thousand times was this intimation kissed and pressed to the bosom of the young Scot! for it marshalled him on the path where both honour and love held out the reward, and possessed him with a secret unknown to others, by which to distinguish him whose death could alone give life to his hopes, and which he prudently resolved to lock up in his own bosom.

But Durward saw the necessity of acting otherwise respecting the information communicated by Hayraddin, since the proposed sally of De la Marck, unless heedfully guarded against, might prove the destruction of the besieging army; so difficult was it, in the tumultuous warfare of those days, to recover from a nocturnal surprise. After pondering on the matter, he formed the additional resolution, that he would not communicate the intelligence save personally, and to both the princes while together; perhaps because he felt that, to mention so well-contrived and hopeful a scheme to Louis whilst in private might be too strong a temptation to the wavering probity of that monarch, and lead him to assist rather than repel the intended sally. He determined, therefore, to watch for an opportunity of revealing the

secret whilst Louis and Charles were met, which, as they were not particularly fond of the constraint imposed by each other's society, was not likely soon to occur.

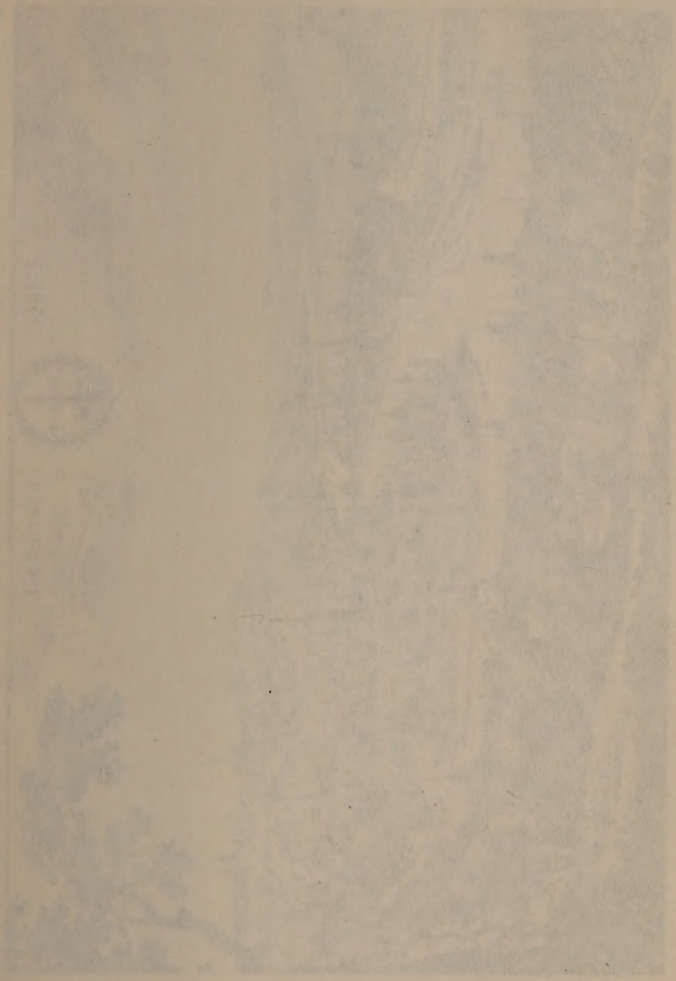
Meanwhile the march continued, and the confederates soon entered the territories of Liege. Here the Burgundian soldiers, at least a part of them, composed of those bands who had acquired the title of *écorcheurs*, or flayers, showed by the usage which they gave the inhabitants, under pretext of avenging the bishop's death, that they well deserved that honourable title; while their conduct greatly prejudiced the cause of Charles — the aggrieved inhabitants, who might otherwise have been passive in the quarrel, assuming arms in self-defence, harassing his march, by cutting off small parties, and falling back before the main body upon the city itself, thus augmenting the numbers and desperation of those who had resolved to defend it. The French, few in number, and those the choice soldiers of the country, kept, according to the King's orders, close by their respective standards, and observed the strictest discipline, a contrast which increased the suspicions of Charles, who could not help remarking that the troops of Louis demeaned themselves as if they were rather friends to the Liegeois than allies of Burgundy.

At length, without experiencing any serious opposition, the army arrived in the rich valley of the Maes, and before the large and populous city of Liege. The Castle of Schonwaldt they found had been totally destroyed, and learned that William de la Marck, whose only talents were of a military cast, had withdrawn his whole forces into the city, and was determined to avoid the encounter of the chivalry of France and Burgundy in the

open field. But the invaders were not long of experiencing the danger which must always exist in attacking a large town, however open, if the inhabitants are disposed to defend it desperately.

A part of the Burgundian vanguard, conceiving that, from the dismantled and breached state of the walls, they had nothing to do but to march into Liege at their ease, entered one of the suburbs with the shouts of 'Burgundy — Burgundy! Kill — kill! All is ours! Remember Louis of Bourbon!' But as they marched in disorder through the narrow streets, and were partly dispersed for the purpose of pillage, a large body of the inhabitants issued suddenly from the town, fell furiously upon them, and made considerable slaughter. De la Marck even availed himself of the breaches in the walls, which permitted the defenders to issue out at different points, and, by taking separate routes into the contested suburb, to attack, in the front, flank, and rear, at once, the assailants, who, stunned by the furious, unexpected, and multiplied nature of the resistance offered, could hardly stand to their arms. The evening, which began to close, added to their confusion.

When this news was brought to Duke Charles, he was furious with rage, which was not much appeased by the offer of King Louis, to send the French men-at-arms into the suburbs, to rescue and bring off the Burgundian vanguard. Rejecting this offer briefly, he would have put himself at the head of his own guards, to extricate those engaged in the incautious advance; but D'Hymbercourt and Crèvecœur entreated him to leave the service to them, and marching into the scene of action at two points, with more order and proper arrangement for



Liège

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mutual support, these two celebrated captains succeeded in repulsing the Liegeois and in extricating the vanguard, who lost, besides prisoners, no fewer than eight hundred men, of whom about a hundred were men-at-arms. The prisoners, however, were not numerous, most of them having been rescued by D'Hymbercourt, who now proceeded to occupy the contested suburb, and to place guards opposite to the town, from which it was divided by an open space or esplanade of five or six hundred yards, left free of buildings for the purposes of defence. There was no moat betwixt the suburb and town, the ground being rocky in that place. A gate fronted the suburb, from which sallies might be easily made, and the wall was pierced by two or three of those breaches which Duke Charles had caused to be made after the battle of Saint Tron, and which had been hastily repaired with mere barricades of timber. D'Hymbercourt turned two culverins on the gate, and placed two others opposite to the principal breach, to repel any sally from the city, and then returned to the Burgundian army, which he found in great disorder.

In fact, the main body and rear of the numerous army of the Duke had continued to advance while the broken and repulsed vanguard was in the act of retreating; and they had come into collision with each other, to the great confusion of both. The necessary absence of D'Hymbercourt, who discharged all the duties of *maréchal du camp*, or, as we should now say, of quartermaster-general, augmented the disorder; and to complete the whole, the night sunk down dark as a wolf's mouth: there fell a thick and heavy rain, and the ground on which the beleaguering army must needs take up their position

was muddy and intersected with many canals. It is scarce possible to form an idea of the confusion which prevailed in the Burgundian army, where leaders were separated from their soldiers and soldiers from their standards and officers. Every one, from the highest to the lowest, was seeking shelter and accommodation where he could individually find it; while the wearied and wounded, who had been engaged in the battle, were calling in vain for shelter and refreshment, and while those who knew nothing of the disaster were pressing on to have their share in the sack of the place, which they had no doubt was proceeding merrily.

When D'Hymbercourt returned he had a task to perform of incredible difficulty, and embittered by the reproaches of his master, who made no allowance for the still more necessary duty in which he had been engaged, until the temper of the gallant soldier began to give way under the Duke's unreasonable reproaches. 'I went hence to restore some order in the van,' he said, 'and left the main body under your Grace's own guidance; and now, on my return, I can neither find that we have front, flank, nor rear, so utter is the confusion.'

'We are the more like a barrel of herrings,' answered Le Glorieux, 'which is the most natural resemblance for a Flemish army.'

The jester's speech made the Duke laugh, and perhaps prevented a further prosecution of the altercation betwixt him and his general.

By dint of great exertion, a small *lusthaus*, or country villa, of some wealthy citizen of Liege was secured and cleared of other occupants for the accommodation of the Duke and his immediate attendants; and the au-

thority of D'Hymbercourt and Crèvecœur at length established a guard in the vicinity, of about forty men-at-arms, who lighted a very large fire, made with the timber of the outhouses, which they pulled down for the purpose.

A little to the left of this villa, and betwixt it and the suburb, which, as we have said, was opposite to the city gate, and occupied by the Burgundian vanguard, lay another pleasure-house, surrounded by a garden and courtyard, and having two or three small inclosures or fields in the rear of it. In this the King of France established his own headquarters. He did not himself pretend to be a soldier, further than a natural indifference to danger and much sagacity qualified him to be called such; but he was always careful to employ the most skilful in that profession, and reposed in them the confidence they merited. Louis and his immediate attendants occupied this second villa; a part of his Scottish Guard were placed in the court, where there were outhouses and sheds to shelter them from the weather; the rest were stationed in the garden. The remainder of the French men-at-arms were quartered closely together and in good order, with alarm-posts stationed, in case of their having to sustain an attack.

Dunois and Crawford, assisted by several old officers and soldiers, amongst whom Le Balafré was conspicuous for his diligence, contrived, by breaking down walls, making openings through hedges, filling up ditches, and the like, to facilitate the communication of the troops with each other, and the orderly combination of the whole in case of necessity.

Meanwhile, the King judged it proper to go without

further ceremony to the quarters of the Duke of Burgundy, to ascertain what was to be the order of proceeding and what coöperation was expected from him. His presence occasioned a sort of council of war to be held, of which Charles might not otherwise have dreamed.

It was then that Quentin Durward prayed earnestly to be admitted, as having something of importance to deliver to the two princes. This was obtained without much difficulty, and great was the astonishment of Louis when he heard him calmly and distinctly relate the purpose of William de la Marck to make a sally upon the camp of the besiegers under the dress and banners of the French. Louis would probably have been much better pleased to have had such important news communicated in private; but as the whole story had been publicly told in presence of the Duke of Burgundy, he only observed, 'that, whether true or false, such a report concerned them most materially.'

'Not a whit — not a whit!' said the Duke, carelessly. 'Had there been such a purpose as this young man announces, it had not been communicated to me by an archer of the Scottish Guard.'

'However that may be,' answered Louis, 'I pray you, fair cousin, you and your captains, to attend, that to prevent the unpleasing consequences of such an attack, should it be made unexpectedly, I will cause my soldiers to wear white scarfs over their armour. Dunois, see it given out on the instant — that is,' he added, 'if our brother and general approves of it.'

'I see no objection,' replied the Duke, 'if the chivalry of France are willing to run the risk of having the name

of Knights of the Smock-sleeve bestowed on them in future.'

'It would be a right well adapted title, friend Charles,' said Le Glorieux, 'considering that a woman is the reward of the most valiant.'

'Well spoken, sagacity,' said Louis. 'Cousin, good-night, I will go arm me. By the way, what if I win the countess with mine own hand?'

'Your Majesty,' said the Duke, in an altered tone of voice, 'must then become a true Fleming.'

'I cannot,' answered Louis, in a tone of the most sincere confidence, 'be more so than I am already, could I but bring you, my dear cousin, to believe it.'

The Duke only replied by wishing the King good-night, in a tone resembling the snort of a shy horse, starting from the caress of the rider when he is about to mount, and is soothing him to stand still.

'I could pardon all his duplicity,' said the Duke to Crèvecœur, 'but cannot forgive his supposing me capable of the gross folly of being duped by his professions.'

Louis, too, had his confidences with Oliver le Dain when he returned to his own quarters. 'This Scot,' he said, 'is such a mixture of shrewdness and simplicity, that I know not what to make of him. *Pasques-dieu!* think of his unpardonable folly in bringing out honest De la Marck's plans of a sally before the face of Burgundy, Crèvecœur, and all of them, instead of rounding it in my ear, and giving me at least the choice of abetting or defeating it!'

'It is better as it is, sire,' said Oliver; 'there are many in your present train who would scruple to assail

Burgundy undefied, or to ally themselves with De la Marck.'

'Thou art right, Oliver. Such fools there are in the world, and we have no time to reconcile their scruples by a little dose of self-interest. We must be true men, Oliver, and good allies of Burgundy, for this night at least; time may give us a chance of a better game. Go, tell no man to unarm himself; and let them shoot, in case of necessity, as sharply on those who cry "France" and "St. Denis" as if they cried "Hell" and "Satan." I will myself sleep in my armour. Let Crawford place Quentin Durward on the extreme point of our line of sentinels, next to the city. Let him e'en have the first benefit of the sally which he has announced to us; if his luck bear him out, it is the better for him. But take an especial care of Martius Galeotti, and see he remain in the rear, in a place of the most absolute safety; he is even but too venturous, and, like a fool, would be both swordsman and philosopher. See to these things, Oliver, and good-night. Our Lady of Cléry, and Monseigneur St. Martin of Tours, be gracious to my slumbers!' [1]

[1] See Note 22.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE SALLY

> He look'd, and saw what numbers numberless
> The city-gates out-pour'd.
>
> *Paradise Regained.*

A DEAD silence soon reigned over that great host which lay in leaguer before Liege. For a long time the cries of the soldiers repeating their signals, and seeking to join their several banners, sounded like the howling of bewildered dogs seeking their masters. But at length, overcome with weariness by the fatigues of the day, the dispersed soldiers crowded under such shelter as they could meet with, and those who could find none sunk down through very fatigue under walls, hedges, and such temporary protection, there to wait for morning — a morning which some of them were never to behold. A dead sleep fell on almost all, excepting those who kept a faint and weary watch by the lodgings of the King and the Duke. The dangers and hopes of the morrow — even the schemes of glory which many of the young nobility had founded upon the splendid prize held out to him who should avenge the murdered Bishop of Liege — glided from their recollection as they lay stupefied with fatigue and sleep. But not so with Quentin Durward. The knowledge that he alone was possessed of the means of distinguishing La Marck in the contest — the recollection by whom that information had been communicated, and the fair augury which might be drawn from

her conveying it to him — the thought that his fortune had brought him to a most perilous and doubtful crisis indeed, but one where there was still, at least, a chance of his coming off triumphant, banished every desire to sleep, and strung his nerves with vigour, which defied fatigue.

Posted, by the King's express order, on the extreme point between the French quarters and the town, a good way to the right of the suburb which we have mentioned, he sharpened his eye to penetrate the mass which lay before him, and excited his ears to catch the slightest sound which might announce any commotion in the beleaguered city. But its huge clocks had successively knelled three hours after midnight, and all continued still and silent as the grave.

At length, and just when Quentin began to think the attack would be deferred till daybreak, and joyfully recollected that there would be then light enough to descry the bar sinister across the fleur-de-lys of Orleans, he thought he heard in the city a humming murmur, like that of disturbed bees mustering for the defence of their hives. He listened; the noise continued, but it was of a character so undistinguished by any peculiar or precise sound, that it might be the murmur of a wind rising among the boughs of a distant grove, or perhaps some stream swollen by the late rain, which was discharging itself into the sluggish Maes with more than usual clamour. Quentin was prevented by these considerations from instantly giving the alarm, which, if done carelessly, would have been a heavy offence.

But when the noise rose louder, and seemed pouring at the same time towards his own post, and towards the

suburbs, he deemed it his duty to fall back as silently as possible, and call his uncle, who commanded the small body of archers destined to his support. All were on their feet in a moment, and with as little noise as possible. In less than a second, Lord Crawford was at their head, and, despatching an archer to alarm the King and his household, drew back his little party to some distance behind their watch-fire, that they might not be seen by its light. The rushing sound, which had approached them more nearly, seemed suddenly to have ceased; but they still heard distinctly the more distant heavy tread of a large body of men approaching the suburb.

'The lazy Burgundians are asleep on their post,' whispered Crawford; 'make for the suburb, Cunningham, and awaken the stupid oxen.'

'Keep well to the rear as you go,' said Durward; 'if ever I heard the tread of mortal men, there is a strong body interposed between us and the suburb.'

'Well said, Quentin, my dainty callant,' said Crawford; 'thou art a soldier beyond thy years. They only make halt till the others come forward. I would I had some knowledge where they are!'

'I will creep forward, my lord,' said Quentin, 'and endeavour to bring you information.'

'Do so, my bonny chield; thou hast sharp ears and eyes, and goodwill; but take heed, I would not lose thee for two and a plack.' [1]

Quentin, with his harquebuss ready prepared, stole forward, through ground which he had reconnoitred carefully in the twilight of the preceding evening, until

[1] A homely Scottish expression for something you value.

he was not only certain that he was in the neighbourhood of a very large body of men, who were standing fast betwixt the King's quarters and the suburbs, but also that there was a detached party of smaller number in advance, and very close to him. They seemed to whisper together, as if uncertain what to do next. At last, the steps of two or three *enfans perdus*, detached from that smaller party, approached him so near as twice a pike's length. Seeing it impossible to retreat undiscovered, Quentin called out aloud, '*Qui vive?*' and was answered by '*Vive Li— Li—ege — c'est à dire,*' added he who spoke, correcting himself, '*Vive la France!*' Quentin instantly fired his harquebuss; a man groaned and fell, and he himself, under the instant but vague discharge of a number of pieces, the fire of which ran in a disorderly manner along the column, and showed it to be very numerous, hastened back to the main guard.

'Admirably done, my brave boy!' said Crawford. 'Now, callants, draw in within the courtyard; they are too many to mell in with the open field.'

They drew within the courtyard and garden accordingly, where they found all in great order, and the King prepared to mount his horse.

'Whither away, sire?' said Crawford; 'you are safest here with your own people.'

'Not so,' said Louis; 'I must instantly to the Duke. He must be convinced of our good faith at this critical moment, or we shall have both Liegeois and Burgundians upon us at once.' And springing on his horse, he bade Dunois command the French troops without the house, and Crawford the Archer Guard and other household troops to defend the *lusthaus* and its inclosures. He

commanded them to bring up two sakers and as many falconets (pieces of cannon for the field), which had been left about half a mile in the rear; and, in the meantime, to make good their posts, but by no means to advance, whatever success they might obtain; and having given these orders, he rode off, with a small escort, to the Duke's quarters.

The delay which permitted these arrangements to be carried fully into effect was owing to Quentin's having fortunately shot the proprietor of the house, who acted as guide to the column which was designed to attack it, and whose attack, had it been made instantly, might have had a chance of being successful.

Durward, who, by the King's order, attended him to the Duke's, found the latter in a state of choleric distemperature, which almost prevented his discharging the duties of a general, which were never more necessary; for, besides the noise of a close and furious combat which had now taken place in the suburb upon the left of their whole army — besides the attack upon the King's quarters, which was fiercely maintained in the centre — a third column of Liegeois, of even superior numbers, had filed out from a more distant breach, and, marching by lanes, vineyards, and passes known to themselves, had fallen upon the right flank of the Burgundian army, who, alarmed, at their war-cries of '*Vive la France!*' and '*Denis Montjoye!*' which mingled with those of '*Liege*' and '*Rouge Sanglier,*' and at the idea thus inspired, of treachery on the part of the French confederates, made a very desultory and imperfect resistance; while the Duke, foaming, and swearing, and cursing his liege lord and all that belonged to him, called out to shoot with bow

and gun on all that was French, whether black or white — alluding to the sleeves with which Louis's soldiers had designated themselves.

The arrival of the King, attended only by Le Balafrè and Quentin, and half a score of archers, restored confidence between France and Burgundy. D'Hymbercourt, Crèvecœur, and others of the Burgundian leaders, whose names were then the praise and dread of war, rushed devotedly into the conflict; and, while some commanders hastened to bring up more distant troops, to whom the panic had not extended, others threw themselves into the tumult, reanimated the instinct of discipline, and while the Duke toiled in the front, shouting, hacking, and hewing, like an ordinary man-at-arms, brought their men by degrees into array, and dismayed the assailants by the use of their artillery. The conduct of Louis, on the other hand, was that of a calm, collected, sagacious leader, who neither sought nor avoided danger, but showed so much self-possession and sagacity that the Burgundian leaders readily obeyed the orders which he issued.

The scene was now become in the utmost degree animated and horrible. On the left the suburb, after a fierce contest, had been set on fire, and a wide and dreadful conflagration did not prevent the burning ruins from being still disputed. On the centre, the French troops, though pressed by immense odds, kept up so close and constant a fire that the little pleasure-house shone bright with the glancing flashes, as if surrounded with a martyr's crown of flames. On the left, the battle swayed backwards and forwards with varied success, as fresh reinforcements poured out of the town, or were brought forward

from the rear of the Burgundian host; and the strife continued with unremitting fury for three mortal hours, which at length brought the dawn, so much desired by the besiegers. The enemy, at this period, seemed to be slackening their efforts upon the right and in the centre, and several discharges of cannon were heard from the *lusthaus*.

'Go,' said the King, to Le Balafré and Quentin, the instant his ear had caught the sound; 'they have got up the sakers and falconets; the pleasure-house is safe, blessed be the Holy Virgin! Tell Dunois to move this way, but rather nearer the walls of Liege, with all our men-at-arms, excepting what he may leave for the defence of the house, and cut in between those thick-headed Liegeois on the right and the city, from which they are supplied with recruits.'

The uncle and nephew galloped off to Dunois and Crawford, who, tired of their defensive war, joyfully obeyed the summons, and filing out at the head of a gallant body of about two hundred French gentlemen, besides squires, and the greater part of the archers and their followers, marched across the field, trampling down the wounded, till they gained the flank of the large body of Liegeois, by whom the right of the Burgundians had been so fiercely assailed. The increasing daylight discovered that the enemy were continuing to pour out from the city, either for the purpose of continuing the battle on that point, or of bringing safely off the forces who were already engaged.

'By Heaven!' said old Crawford to Dunois, 'were I not certain it is *thou* that art riding by my side, I would say I saw thee among yonder banditti and burghers,

marshalling and arraying them with thy mace — only, if yon be thou, thou art bigger than thou art wont to be. Art thou sure yonder armed leader is not thy wraith, thy double-man, as these Flemings call it?'

'My wraith!' said Dunois; 'I know not what you mean. But yonder is a caitiff with my bearings displayed on crest and shield, whom I will presently punish for his insolence.'

'In the name of all that is noble, my lord, leave the vengeance to me!' said Quentin.

'To *thee* indeed, young man!' said Dunois; 'that is a modest request. No — these things brook no substitution.' Then turning on his saddle, he called out to those around him, 'Gentlemen of France, form your line, level your lances! Let the rising sunbeams shine through the battalions of yonder swine of Liege and hogs of Ardennes, that masquerade in our ancient coats.'

The men-at-arms answered with a loud shout of 'A Dunois — a Dunois! Long live the bold Bastard! Orleans to the rescue!' And, with their leader in the centre, they charged at full gallop. They encountered no timid enemy. The large body which they charged consisted, excepting some mounted officers, entirely of infantry, who, setting the butt of their lances against their feet, the front rank kneeling, the second stooping, and those behind presenting their spears over their heads, offered such resistance to the rapid charge of the men-at-arms as the hedgehog presents to his enemy. Few were able to make way through that iron wall; but of those few was Dunois, who, giving spur to his horse, and making the noble animal leap more than twelve feet at a bound, fairly broke his way into the middle of the

phalanx, and made towards the object of his animosity. What was his surprise to find Quentin still by his side, and fighting in the same front with himself — youth, desperate courage, and the determination to do or die having still kept the youth abreast with the best knight in Europe, for such was Dunois reported, and truly reported, at the period.

Their spears were soon broken; but the lanzknechts were unable to withstand the blows of their long heavy swords; while the horses and riders, armed in complete steel, sustained little inquiry from their lances. Still Dunois and Durward were contending with rival efforts to burst forward to the spot where he who had usurped the armorial bearings of Dunois was doing the duty of a good and valiant leader, when Dunois, observing the boar's head and tusks, the usual bearing of William de la Marck, in another part of the conflict, called out to Quentin, 'Thou art worthy to avenge the arms of Orleans! I leave thee the task. Balafré, support your nephew; but let none dare to interfere with Dunois' boar-hunt.'

That Quentin Durward joyfully acquiesced in this division of labour cannot be doubted, and each pressed forward upon his separate object, followed, and defended from behind, by such men-at-arms as were able to keep up with them.

But at this moment the column which De la Marck had proposed to support, when his own course was arrested by the charge of Dunois, had lost all the advantages they had gained during the night; while the Burgundians, with returning day, had begun to show the qualities which belong to superior discipline. The great

mass of Liegeois were compelled to retreat, and at length to fly; and, falling back on those who were engaged with the French men-at-arms, the whole became a confused tide of fighters, fliers, and pursuers, which rolled itself towards the city walls, and at last was poured into the ample and undefended breach through which the Liegeois had sallied.

Quentin made more than human exertions to overtake the special object of his pursuit, who was still in his sight, striving, by voice and example, to renew the battle, and bravely supported by a chosen party of lanzknechts. Le Balafré and several of his comrades attached themselves to Quentin, much marvelling at the extraordinary gallantry displayed by so young a soldier. On the very brink of the breach De la Marck — for it was himself — succeeded in effecting a momentary stand, and repelling some of the most forward of the pursuers. He had a mace of iron in his hand, before which everything seemed to go down, and was so much covered with blood that it was almost impossible to discern those bearings on his shield which had so much incensed Dunois.

Quentin now found little difficulty in singling him out; for the commanding situation of which he had possessed himself, and the use he made of his terrible mace, caused many of the assailants to seek safer points of attack than that where so desperate a defender presented himself. But Quentin, to whom the importance attached to victory over this formidable antagonist was better known, sprung from his horse at the bottom of the breach, and letting the noble animal, the gift of the Duke of Orleans, run loose through the tumult, ascended the

ruins to measure swords with the Boar of Ardennes. The latter, as if he had seen his intention, turned toward Durward with mace uplifted; and they were on the point of encounter when a dreadful shout of triumph, of tumult, and of despair announced that the besiegers were entering the city at another point, and in the rear of those who defended the breach. Assembling around him, by voice and bugle, the desperate partners of his desperate fortune, De la Marck, at those appalling sounds, abandoned the breach, and endeavoured to effect his retreat towards a part of the city from which he might escape to the other side of the Maes. His immediate followers formed a deep body of well-disciplined men, who, never having given quarter, were resolved now not to ask it, and who, in that hour of despair, threw themselves into such firm order that their front occupied the whole breadth of the street through which they slowly retired, making head from time to time, and checking the pursuers, many of whom began to seek a safer occupation by breaking into the houses for plunder. It is therefore probable that De la Marck might have effected his escape, his disguise concealing him from those who promised themselves to win honour and grandeur upon his head, but for the stanch pursuit of Quentin, his uncle Le Balafré, and some of his comrades. At every pause which was made by the lanzknechts a furious combat took place betwixt them and the archers, and in every *mêlée* Quentin sought De la Marck; but the latter, whose present object was to retreat, seemed to evade the young Scot's purpose of bringing him to single combat. The confusion was general in every direction. The shrieks and cries of women, the yelling of the terrified inhabit-

ants, now subjected to the extremity of military license, sounded horribly shrill amid the shouts of battle, like the voice of misery and despair contending with that of fury and violence, which should be heard farthest and loudest.

It was just when De la Marck, retiring through this infernal scene, had passed the door of a small chapel of peculiar sanctity, that the shouts of 'France — France! Burgundy — Burgundy!' apprized him that a part of the besiegers were entering the farther end of the street, which was a narrow one, and that his retreat was cut off. 'Comrade,' he said, 'take all the men with you. Charge yonder fellows roundly, and break through if you can; with me it is over. I am man enough, now that I am brought to bay, to send some of these vagabond Scots to hell before me.'

His lieutenant obeyed, and, with most of the few lanzknechts who remained alive, hurried to the farther end of the street, for the purpose of charging those Burgundians who were advancing, and so forcing their way so as to escape. About six of De la Marck's best men remained to perish with their master, and fronted the archers, who were not many more in number. 'Sanglier! Sanglier! Hola! gentlemen of Scotland,' said the ruffian but undaunted chief, waving his mace, 'who longs to gain a coronet — who strikes at the Boar of Ardennes? You, young man, have, methinks, a hankering; but you must win ere you wear it.'

Quentin heard but imperfectly the words, which were partly lost in the hollow helmet; but the action could not be mistaken, and he had but time to bid his uncle and comrades, as they were gentlemen, to stand back, when De la Marck sprung upon him with a bound like a tiger,

aiming at the same time a blow with his mace, so as to make his hand and foot keep time together, and giving his stroke full advantage of the descent of his leap; but, light of foot and quick of eye, Quentin leaped aside, and disappointed an aim which would have been fatal had it taken effect.

They then closed, like the wolf and the wolf-dog, their comrades on either side remaining inactive spectators, for Le Balafré roared out for fair play, adding, 'that he would venture his nephew on him, were he as wight as Wallace.'

Neither was the experienced soldier's confidence unjustified; for, although the blows of the despairing robber fell like those of the hammer on the anvil, yet the quick motions and dexterous swordsmanship of the young archer enabled him to escape, and to requite them with the point of his less noisy though more fatal weapon; and that so often and so effectually, that the huge strength of his antagonist began to give way to fatigue, while the ground on which he stood became a puddle of blood. Yet, still unabated in courage and ire, the Wild Boar of Ardennes fought on with as much mental energy as at first, and Quentin's victory seemed dubious and distant, when a female voice behind him called him by his name, ejaculating, 'Help — help! for the sake of the blessed Virgin!'

He turned his head, and with a single glance beheld Gertrude Pavillon, her mantle stripped from her shoulders, dragged forcibly along by a French soldier, one of several, who, breaking into the chapel close by, had seized, as their prey, on the terrified females who had taken refuge there.

'Wait for me but one moment,' exclaimed Quentin to De la Marck, and sprung to extricate his benefactress from a situation of which he conjectured all the dangers.

'I wait no man's pleasure,' said De la Marck, flourishing his mace, and beginning to retreat, glad, no doubt, of being free of so formidable an assailant.

'You shall wait mine, though, by your leave,' said Balafré; 'I will not have my nephew baulked.' So saying, he instantly assaulted De la Marck with his two-handed sword.

Quentin found, in the meanwhile, that the rescue of Gertrude was a task more difficult than could be finished in one moment. Her captor, supported by his comrades, refused to relinquish his prize; and whilst Durward, aided by one or two of his countrymen, endeavoured to compel him to do so, the former beheld the chance which Fortune had so kindly afforded him for fortune and happiness glide out of his reach; so that, when he stood at length in the street with the liberated Gertrude, there was no one near them. Totally forgetting the defenceless situation of his companion, he was about to spring away in pursuit of the Boar of Ardennes, as the greyhound tracks the deer, when, clinging to him in her despair, she exclaimed, 'For the sake of your mother's honour, leave me not here! As you are a gentleman, protect me to my father's house, which once sheltered you and the Lady Isabelle! For her sake leave me not!'

Her call was agonising, but it was irresistible; and bidding a mental adieu, with unutterable bitterness of feeling, to all the gay hopes which had stimulated his exertion, carried him through that bloody day, and which at one moment seemed to approach consummation,

Quentin, like an unwilling spirit who obeys a talisman which he cannot resist, protected Gertrude to Pavillon's house, and arrived in time to defend that and the syndic himself against the fury of the licentious soldiery.

Meantime, the King and the Duke of Burgundy entered the city on horseback, and through one of the breaches. They were both in complete armour, but the latter, covered with blood from the plume to the spur, drove his steed furiously up the breach, which Louis surmounted with the stately pace of one who leads a procession. They despatched orders to stop the sack of the city, which had already commenced, and to assemble their scattered troops. The princes themselves proceeded towards the great church, both for the protection of many of the distinguished inhabitants, who had taken refuge there, and in order to hold a sort of military council after they had heard high mass.

Busied like other officers of his rank in collecting those under his command, Lord Crawford, at the turning of one of the streets which leads to the Maes, met Le Balafré sauntering composedly towards the river, holding in his hand, by the gory locks, a human head, with as much indifference as a fowler carries a game-pouch.

'How now, Ludovic!' said his commander; 'what are ye doing with that carrion?'

'It is all that is left of a bit of work which my nephew shaped out, and nearly finished, and I put the last hand to,' said Le Balafrè — 'a good fellow that I despatched yonder, and who prayed me to throw his head into the Maes. Men have queer fancies when old Small Back [1]

[1] A cant expression in Scotland for death, usually delineated as a skeleton.

is gripping them; but Small Back must lead down the dance with us all in our time.'

'And you are going to throw that head into the Maes?' said Crawford, looking more attentively on the ghastly memorial of mortality.

'Ay, truly am I,' said Ludovic Lesly. 'If you refuse a dying man his boon, you are likely to be haunted by his ghost, and I love to sleep sound at nights.'

'You must take your chance of the ghaist, man,' said Crawford; 'for, by my soul, there is more lies on that dead pow than you think for. Come along with me — not a word more — come along with me.'

'Nay, for that matter,' said Le Balafré, 'I made him no promise; for, in truth, I had off his head before the tongue had well done wagging; and as I feared him not living, by St. Martin of Tours, I fear him as little when he is dead. Besides, my little gossip, the merry friar of St. Martin's will lend me a pot of holy water.'

When high mass had been said in the cathedral church of Liege, and the terrified town was restored to some moderate degree of order, Louis and Charles, with their peers around, proceeded to hear the claims of those who had any to make for services performed during the battle. Those which respected the county of Croye and its fair mistress were first received, and, to the disappointment of sundry claimants who had thought themselves sure of the rich prize, there seemed doubt and mystery to involve their several pretensions. Crèvecœur showed a boar's hide such as De la Marck usually wore; Dunois produced a cloven shield, with his armorial bearings; and there were others who claimed the merit of having despatched the murderer of the bishop, pro-

ducing similar tokens — the rich reward fixed on De la Marck's head having brought death to all who were armed in his resemblance.

There was much noise and contest among the competitors, and Charles, internally regretting the rash promise which had placed the hand and wealth of his fair vassal on such a hazard, was in hopes he might find means of evading all these conflicting claims, when Crawford pressed forward into the circle, dragging Le Balafré after him, who, awkward and bashful, followed like an unwilling mastiff towed on in a leash, as his leader exclaimed, — 'Away with your hoofs and hides, and painted iron! No one, save he who slew the Boar, can show the tusks!'

So saying, he flung on the floor the bloody head, easily known as that of De la Marck by the singular conformation of the jaws, which in reality had a certain resemblance to those of the animal whose name he bore, and which was instantly recognised by all who had seen him.[1]

'Crawford,' said Louis, while Charles sat silent, in gloomy and displeased surprise, 'I trust it is one of my faithful Scots who has won this prize?'

'It is Ludovic Lesly, sire, whom we call Le Balafré,' replied the old soldier.

'But is he noble,' said the Duke — 'is he of gentle blood? Otherwise our promise is void.'

'He is a cross ungainly piece of wood enough,' said Crawford, looking at the tall, awkward, embarrassed figure of the archer; 'but I will warrant him a branch of the tree of Rothes for all that, and they have been as

[1] See Note 23.

noble as any house in France or Burgundy, ever since it is told of their founder that,

> Between the less-lee[1] and the mair
> He slew the knight, and left him there.'

'There is then no help for it,' said the Duke, 'and the fairest and richest heiress in Burgundy must be the wife of a rude mercenary soldier like this, or die secluded in a convent — and she the only child of our faithful Reginald de Croye! I have been too rash.'

And a cloud settled on his brow, to the surprise of his peers, who seldom saw him evince the slightest token of regret for the necessary consequences of an adopted resolution.

'Hold but an instant,' said the Lord Crawford, 'it may be better than your Grace conjectures. Hear but what this cavalier has to say. Speak out, man, and a murrain to thee,' he added, apart to Le Balafré.

But that blunt soldier, though he could make a shift to express himself intelligibly enough to King Louis, to whose familiarity he was habituated, yet found himself incapable of enunciating his resolution before so splendid an assembly as that in presence of which he then stood; and after having turned his shoulder to the princes, and preluded with a hoarse chuckling laugh, and two or three tremendous contortions of countenance, he was only able to pronounce the words, 'Saunders Souplejaw' — and then stuck fast.

'May it please your Majesty and your Grace,' said Crawford, 'I must speak for my countryman and old comrade. You shall understand that he has had it

[1] See Note 24.

prophesied to him by a seer in his own land, that the fortune of his house is to be made by marriage; but as he is, like myself, something the worse for the wear, — loves the wine-house better than a lady's summer-parlour, and, in short, having some barrack tastes and likings which would make greatness in his own person rather an encumbrance to him, he hath acted by my advice, and resigns the pretensions acquired by the fate of slaying William de la Marck to him by whom the Wild Boar was actually brought to bay, who is his maternal nephew.'

'I will vouch for that youth's services and prudence,' said King Louis, overjoyed to see that fate had thrown so gallant a prize to one over whom he had some influence. 'Without his prudence and vigilance we had been ruined. It was he who made us aware of the night-sally.'

'I then,' said Charles, 'owe him some reparation for doubting his veracity.'

'And I can attest his gallantry as a man-at-arms,' said Dunois.

'But,' interrupted Crèvecœur, 'though the uncle be a Scottish *gentillâtre*, that makes not the nephew necessarily so.'

'He is of the house of Durward,' said Crawford; 'descended from that Allan Durward who was High Steward of Scotland.'

'Nay, if it be young Durward,' said Crèvecœur, 'I say no more. Fortune has declared herself on his side too plainly for me to struggle further with her humoursome ladyship; but it is strange, from lord to horseboy, how wonderfully these Scots stick by each other.'

'Highlanders, shoulder to shoulder!' answered Lord Crawford, laughing at the mortification of the proud Burgundian.

'We have yet to inquire,' said Charles, thoughtfully, 'what the fair lady's sentiments may be towards this fortunate adventurer.'

'By the mass!' said Crèvecœur, 'I have but too much reason to believe your Grace will find her more amenable to authority than on former occasions. But why should I grudge this youth his preferment, since, after all, it is sense, firmness, and gallantry which have put him in possession of WEALTH, RANK, and BEAUTY?'

I HAD already sent these sheets to the press, concluding, as I thought, with a moral of excellent tendency for the encouragement of all fair-haired, blue-eyed, long-legged, stout-hearted emigrants from my native country who might be willing in stirring times to take up the gallant profession of cavalieros of fortune. But a friendly monitor, one of those who like the lump of sugar which is found at the bottom of a tea-cup as well as the flavour of the souchong itself, has entered a bitter remonstrance, and insists that I should give a precise and particular account of the espousals of the young heir of Glenhoulakin and the lovely Flemish countess, and tell what tournaments were held, and how many lances were broken, upon so interesting an occasion; nor withhold from the curious reader the number of sturdy boys who inherited the valour of Quentin Durward and of bright damsels in whom were renewed the charms of Isabelle de Croye. I replied in course of post, that times were changed, and public weddings

were entirely out of fashion. In days, traces of which I myself can remember, not only were the 'fifteen friends' of the happy pair invited to witness their union, but the bridal minstrelsy still continued, as in the 'Ancient Mariner,' to 'nod their heads' till morning shone on them. The sack-posset was eaten in the nuptial chamber, the stocking was thrown, and the bride's garter was struggled for in presence of the happy couple whom Hymen had made one flesh. The authors of the period were laudably accurate in following its fashions. They spared you not a blush of the bride, not a rapturous glance of the bridegroom, not a diamond in her hair, not a button on his embroidered waistcoat; until at length, with Astræa, 'they fairly put their characters to bed.' But how little does this agree with the modest privacy which induces our modern brides — sweet bashful darlings! — to steal from pomp and plate, and admiration and flattery, and, like honest Shenstone,

> Seek for freedom at an inn!

To these, unquestionably, an exposure of the circumstances of publicity with which a bridal of the fifteenth century was always celebrated must appear in the highest degree disgusting. Isabelle de Croye would be ranked in their estimation far below the maid who milks and does the meanest chares; for even she, were it in the church-porch, would reject the hand of her journeyman shoemaker should he propose '*faire des noces*,' as it is called on Parisian signs, instead of going down on the top of the long coach to spend the honeymoon *incognito* at Deptford or Greenwich. I will not, therefore, tell more of this matter, but will steal away from the wedding as Ariosto

from that of Angelica, leaving it to whom it may please to add further particulars, after the fashion of their own imagination.

Some better bard shall sing, in feudal state
How Braquemont's Castle op'd its Gothic gate,
When on the wand'ring Scot its lovely heir
Bestow'd her beauty and an earldom fair.[1]

[1] E come a ritornare in sua contrada
Trovasse e buon naviglio e miglior tempo,
E dell' India a Medor desse lo scettro
Forse altri cantera con miglior plettro.
Orlando Furioso, Canto xxx, Stanza 16.

THE END

NOTES AND GLOSSARY

NOTES

Note 1, p. 5.

Vox quoque Mœrim
Jam fugit ipsa; lupi Mœrim videre priores.
Virgilii *Ecloga*, ix.

The commentators add, in explanation of this passage, the opinion of Pliny: 'The being beheld by a wolf in Italy is accounted noxious, and is supposed to take away the speech of a man, if these animals behold him ere he sees them.'

Note 2, p. 33

The adventure of Quentin at Liege may be thought overstrained, yet it is extraordinary what slight circumstances will influence the public mind in a moment of doubt and uncertainty. Most readers must remember that, when the Dutch were on the point of rising against the French yoke, their zeal for liberation received a strong impulse from the landing of a person in a British volunteer uniform, whose presence, though that of a private individual, was received as a guarantee of succours from England.

Note 3, p. 59.

Fought by the insurgents of Liege against the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, when Count of Charolais, in which the people of Liege were defeated with great slaughter.

Note 4, p. 78

In assigning the present date to the murder of the Bishop of Liege, Louis de Bourbon, history has been violated. It is true that the bishop was made prisoner by the insurgents of that city. It is also true that the report of the insurrection came to Charles with a rumour that the bishop was slain, which excited his indignation against Louis, who was then in his power. But these things happened in 1468, and the Bishop's murder did not take place till 1482. In the months of August and September of that year, William de la Marck, called the Wild Boar of Ardennes, entered into a conspiracy with the discontented citizens of Liege

against their bishop, Louis of Bourbon, being aided with considerable sums of money by the King of France. By this means, and the assistance of many murderers and banditti, who thronged to him as to a leader befitting them, De la Marck assembled a body of troops, whom he dressed in scarlet as a uniform, with a boar's head on the left sleeve. With this little army he approached the city of Liege. Upon this the citizens, who were engaged in the conspiracy, came to their bishop, and, offering to stand by him to the death, exhorted him to march out against these robbers. The bishop, therefore, put himself at the head of a few troops of his own, trusting to the assistance of the people of Liege. But so soon as they came in sight of the enemy, the citizens, as before agreed, fled from the bishop's banner, and he was left with his own handful of adherents. At this moment De la Marck charged at the head of his banditti with the expected success. The bishop was brought before the profligate knight, who first cut him over the face, then murdered him with his own hand, and caused his body to be exposed naked in the great square of Liege before St. Lambert's cathedral.

Such is the actual narrative of a tragedy which struck with horror the people of the time. The murder of the bishop has been fifteen years antedated in the text, for reasons which the reader of romances will easily appreciate.

Note 5, p. 105

Fynes Morrison describes this species of soldiery as follows: — 'He that at this day looks upon their *schwarz-reiters* (that is, black horsemen) must confess that, to make their horses and boots shine, they make themselves as black as colliers. These horsemen wear black clothes, and poor though they be, spend no small time in brushing them. The most of them have black horses, which while they painfully dress, and (as I have said) delight to have their boots and shoes shine with blacking-stuff, their hands and faces become black, and thereof they have their foresaid name. Yet I have heard Germans say that they do thus make themselves black to seem more terrible to their enemies.' — Fynes Morrison's *Itinerary*, edition 1617, p. 165.

Note 6, p. 128

Indeed, though lying on an exposed and warlike frontier, it was never taken by an enemy, but preserved the proud name of

Péronne la Pucelle, until the Duke of Wellington, a great destroyer of that sort of reputation, took the place in the memorable advance upon Paris in 1815.

NOTE 7, p. 129

D'Hymbercourt, or Imbercourt, was put to death by the inhabitants of Ghent with the Chancellor of Burgundy in the year 1477. Mary of Burgundy, daughter of Charles the Bold, appeared in mourning in the market-place, and with tears besought the life of her servants from her insurgent subjects, but in vain.

NOTE 8, p. 129

Philip des Comines was described in the former editions of this work as a little man, fitted rather for counsel than action. This was a description made at a venture, to vary the military portraits with which the age and work abound. Sleidan the historian, upon the authority of Matthieu d'Arves, who knew Philip des Comines, and had served in his household, says he was a man of tall stature and a noble presence. The learned Monsieur Petitot, editor of the edition of *Memoirs relative to the History of France*, a work of great value, intimates that Philip des Comines made a figure at the games of chivalry and pageants exhibited on the wedding of Charles of Burgundy with Margaret of England in 1468. See the *Chronicles* of Jean de Troyes, in Petitot's edition of the *Mêmoires Relatifs à l' Histoire de France*, vol. xiii, p. 375, note. I have looked into Oliver de la Marck, who, in lib. ii. chapter iv. of his *Memoirs*, gives an ample account of these 'fierce vanities,' containing as many miscellaneous articles as the reticule of the old merchant of *Peter Schlemihl*, who bought shadows, and carried with him in his bag whatever any one could wish or demand in return. There are in that splendid description knights, dames, pages, and archers, good store besides of castles, fiery dragons, and dromedaries; there are leopards riding upon lions; there are rocks, orchards, fountains, spears broken and whole, and the twelve labours of Hercules. In such a brilliant medley I had some trouble in finding Philip des Comines. He is the first named, however, of a gallant band of assailants, knights, and noblemen, to the number of twenty, who, with the Prince of Orange as their leader, encountered, in a general tourney, with a party of the same number under the profligate Adolf of Cleves, who acted as challenger, by the romantic title of *Arbre d'Or*. The encounter, though with arms of courtesy, was very fierce, and separated by main force, not with-

out difficulty. Philip des Comines has, therefore, a title to be accounted *tam Marte quam Mercurio*, though, when we consider the obscurity which has settled on the rest of this *troupe dorée*, we are at no loss to estimate the most valuable of his qualifications.

Note 9, p. 132

After the battle of Montl'héry, in 1465, Charles, then Compte de Charolais, had an interview with Louis under the walls of Paris, each at the head of a small party. The two princes dismounted and walked together, so deeply engaged in discussing the business of their meeting, that Charles forgot the peculiarity of his situation; and when Louis turned back towards the town of Paris, from which he came, the Count of Charolais kept him company so far as to pass the line of outworks with which Paris was surrounded, and enter a field-work which communicated with the town by a trench. At this period he had only five or six persons in company with him. His escort caught an alarm for his safety, and his principal followers rode forward from where he had left them, remembering that his grandfather had been assassinated at Montereau in a similar parley, on 10th September 1419. To their great joy the count returned uninjured, accompanied with a guard belonging to Louis. The Burgundians taxed him with rashness in no measured terms. 'Say no more of it,' said Charles; 'I acknowledge the extent of my folly, but I was not aware what I was doing till I entered the redoubt.' — *Mémoires de Philippe des Comines*, chap. xiii.

Louis was much praised for his good faith on this occasion; and it was natural that the duke should call it to recollection when his enemy so unexpectedly put himself in his power by his visit to Péronne.

Note 10, p. 142

The arrival of three brothers, princes of the house of Savoy, of Monseigneur de Lau, whom the King had long detained in prison, of Sire Poncet de Rivière, and the Seigneur d'Urfé — who, by the way, as a romance writer of a peculiar turn, might have been happily enough introduced into the present work, but the fate of the Euphuist was a warning to the Author — all of these nobles bearing the emblem of Burgundy, the cross, namely, of St. Andrew, inspired Louis with so much suspicion that he very impolitically demanded to be lodged in the old Castle of Péronne, and thus rendered himself an absolute captive. — See Comines's *Memoirs for the Year* 1468.

Note 11, p. 180

The historical facts attending this celebrated interview are expounded and enlarged upon in chapter xxvii. Agents sent by Louis had tempted the people of Liege to rebel against their superior, Duke Charles, and persecute and murder their bishop. But Louis was not prepared for their acting with such promptitude. They flew to arms with the temerity of a fickle rabble, took the bishop prisoner, menaced and insulted him, and tore to pieces one or two of his canons. This news was sent to the Duke of Burgundy at the moment when Louis had so unguardedly placed himself in his power; and the consequence was, that Charles placed guards on the Castle of Péronne, and, deeply resenting the treachery of the King of France in exciting sedition in his dominions, while he pretended the most intimate friendship, he deliberated whether he should not put Louis to death.

Three days Louis was detained in this very precarious situation; and it was only his profuse liberality amongst Charles's favourites and courtiers which finally ensured him from death or deposition. Comines, who was the Duke of Burgundy's chamberlain at the time and slept in his apartment, says Charles neither undressed nor slept, but flung himself from time to time on the bed, and at other times wildly traversed the apartment. It was long before his violent temper became in any degree tractable. At length he only agreed to give Louis his liberty on condition of his accompanying him in person against, and employing his troops in subduing, the mutineers whom his intrigues had instigated to arms.

This was a bitter and degrading alternative. But Louis, seeing no other mode of compounding for the effects of his rashness, not only submitted to this discreditable condition, but swore to it upon a crucifix said to have belonged to Charlemagne. These particulars are from Comines. There is a succinct epitome of them in Sir Nathaniel Wraxall's *History of France*, vol. i.

Note 12, p. 189

Louis kept his promise of vengeance against Cardinal La Balue, whom he always blamed as having betrayed him to Burgundy. After he had returned to his own kingdom, he caused his late favourite to be immured in one of the iron cages at Loches. These were constructed with horrible ingenuity, so that a person of ordinary size could neither stand up at his full height nor lie length-

wise in them. Some ascribe this horrid device to Balue himself. At any rate, he was confined in one of these dens for eleven years, nor did Louis permit him to be liberated till his last illness.

Note 13, p. 192

While I perused these passages in the old manuscript chronicle, I could not help feeling astonished that an intellect acute as that of Louis XI certainly was could so delude itself by a sort of superstition of which one would think the stupidest savages incapable; but the terms of the King's prayer, on a similar occasion, as preserved by Brantôme, are of a tenor fully as extraordinary. It is that which, being overheard by a fool or jester, was by him made public, and let in light on an act of fratricide which might never have been suspected. The way in which the story is narrated by the corrupted courtier, who could jest with all that is criminal as well as with all that is profligate, is worthy the reader's notice; for such actions are seldom done where there are not men with hearts of the nether millstone, capable and willing to make them matters of laughter.

'Among the numerous good tricks of dissimulation, feints, and finesses of gallantry which the good King (Louis XI) did in his time, he put to death his brother, the Duke de Guyenne, at the moment when the Duke least thought of such a thing, and while the King was making the greatest show of love to him during his life, and of affection for him at his death, managing the whole concern with so much art that it would never have been known had not the King taken into his own service a fool who had belonged to his deceased brother. But it chanced that Louis, being engaged in his devout prayers and orisons at the high altar of Our Lady of Cléry, whom he called his good patroness, and no person nigh except this fool, who, without his knowledge, was within earshot, he thus gave vent to his pious homilies:

'"Ah, my good Lady, my gentle mistress, my only friend, in whom alone I have resource, I pray you to supplicate God in my behalf, and to be my advocate with Him that He may pardon me the death of my brother, whom I caused to be poisoned by that wicked abbot of St. John. I confess my guilt to thee as to my good patroness and mistress. But then what could I do? he was perpetually causing disorder in my kingdom. Cause me then to be pardoned, my good Lady, and I know what a reward I will give thee."'

This singular confession did not escape the jester, who upbraided the King with the fratricide in the face of the whole company at dinner, which Louis was fain to let pass without observation, in case of increasing the slander.

Note 14, p. 197.

Varillas, in a history of Louis XI, observes, that his provost-marshal was often so precipitate in execution as to slay another person instead of him whom the King had indicated. This always occasioned a double execution, for the wrath or revenge of Louis was never satisfied with a vicarious punishment.

Note 15, p. 201

The Author has endeavoured to give to the odious Tristan l'Hermite a species of dogged and brutal fidelity to Louis similar to the attachment of a bull-dog to his master. With all the atrocity of his execrable character, he was certainly a man of courage, and was, in his youth, made knight on the breach of Fronsac, with a great number of other young nobles, by the honour-giving hand of the elder Dunois, the celebrated hero of Charles V's reign.

Note 16, p. 209

The death of Martius Galeotti was in some degree connected with Louis XI. The astrologer was at Lyons, and hearing that the King was approaching the city, got on horseback in order to meet him. As he threw himself hastily from his horse to pay his respects to the King, he fell with a violence which, joined to his extreme corpulence, was the cause of his death in 1478.

But the acute and ready-witted expedient to escape instant death had no reference to the history of this philosopher. The same, or nearly the same, story is told of Tiberius, who demanded of a soothsayer, Thrasyllus, if he knew the day of his own death, and received for answer, 'It would take place just three days before that of the Emperor.' On this reply, instead of being thrown over the rocks into the sea, as had been the tyrant's first intention, he was taken great care of for the rest of his life. — *Taciti Annal.*, lib. vi. cap. 22.

The circumstances in which Louis XI received a similar reply from an astrologer are as follows: — The soothsayer in question had presaged that a female favourite, to whom the King was very

much attached, should die in a week. As he proved a true prophet, the King was as much incensed as if the astrologer could have prevented the evil he predicted. He sent for the philosopher, and had a party stationed to assassinate him as he retired from the royal presence. Being asked by the King concerning his own fortunes, he confessed that he perceived signs of some imminent danger. Being further questioned concerning the day of his own death, he was shrewd enough to answer with composure, that it would be exactly three days before that of his Majesty. There was, of course, care taken that he should escape his destined fate; and he was ever after much protected by the King, as a man of real science, and intimately connected with the royal destinies.

Although almost all the historians of Louis represent him as a dupe to the common but splendid imposture of judicial astrology, yet his credulity could not be deep-rooted, if the following anecdote, reported by Bayle, be correct.

Upon one occasion, Louis, intending to hunt, and doubtful of the weather, inquired of an astrologer near his person whether it would be fair. The sage, having recourse to his astrolabe, answered with confidence in the affirmative. At the entrance of the forest the royal cortège was met by a charcoalman, who expressed to some menials of the train his surprise that the King should have thought of hunting in a day which threatened tempest. The collier's prediction proved true. The King and his court were driven from their sport well drenched; and Louis, having heard what the collier had said, ordered the man before him. 'How were you more accurate in foretelling the weather, my friend,' said he, 'than this learned man?' 'I am an ignorant man, sire,' answered the collier, 'was never at school, and cannot read or write. But I have an astrologer of my own, who shall foretell weather with any of them. It is, with reverence, the ass who carries my charcoal, who always, when bad weather is approaching, points forward his ears, walks more slowly than usual, and tries to rub himself against the walls; and it was from these signs that I foretold yesterday's storm.' The King burst into a fit of laughing, dismissed the astrological biped, and assigned the collier a small pension to maintain the quadruped, swearing he would never in future trust to any other astrologer than the charcoalman's ass.

But if there is any truth in this story, the credulity of Louis was not of a nature to be removed by the failure there mentioned. He is said to have believed in the prediction of Angelo Cattho, his physician, and the friend of Comines, who foretold the death of

Charles of Burgundy in the very time and hour when it took place at the battle of Morat. Upon this assurance, Louis vowed a silver screen to the shrine of St. Martin, which he afterwards fulfilled at the expense of one hundred thousand francs. It is well known, besides, that he was the abject and devoted slave of his physicians. Coctier, or Cothier, one of their number, besides the retaining fee of ten thousand crowns, extorted from his royal patient great sums in lands and money, and, in addition to all, the bishopric of Amiens for his nephew. He maintained over Louis unbounded influence, by using to him the most disrespectful harshness and insolence. 'I know,' he said to the suffering King, 'that one morning you will turn me adrift like so many others. But, by Heaven, you had better beware, for you will not live eight days after you have done so!' It is unnecessary to dwell longer on the fears and superstitions of a prince whom the wretched love of life induced to submit to such indignities.

NOTE 17, p. 231.

The story is told more bluntly, and less probably, in the French memoirs of the period, which affirm that Comines, out of a presumption inconsistent with his excellent good sense, had asked of Charles of Burgundy to draw off his boots, without having been treated with any previous familiarity to lead to such a freedom. I have endeavoured to give the anecdote a turn more consistent with the sense and prudence of the great author concerned.

NOTE 18, p. 241

There is little doubt that, during the interesting scene at Péronne, Philip des Comines first learned intimately to know the great powers of mind of Louis XI, by which he was so much dazzled that it is impossible, in reading his *Memoirs*, not to be sensible that he was blinded by them to the more odious shades of his character. He entertained from this time forward a partiality to France. The historian passed into France about 1472, and rose high in the good graces of Louis XI. He afterwards became the proprietor of the lordship of Argenton and others, a title which was given him by anticipation in the former editions of this work. He did not obtain it till he was in the French service. After the death of Louis, Philip des Comines fell under the suspicion of the daughter of Louis, called our Lady of Beaujeu, as too zealous a partizan of the rival house of Orleans. The historian himself was imprisoned

for eight months in one of the iron cages which he has so forcibly described. It was there that he regretted the fate of a court life. 'I have ventured on the great ocean,' he said, in his affliction, 'and the waves have devoured me.' He was subjected to a trial, and exiled from court for some years by the Parliament of Paris, being found guilty of holding intercourse with disaffected persons. He survived this cloud, however, and was afterwards employed by Charles VIII in one or two important missions, where talents were required. Louis XII also transferred his favour to the historian, but did not employ him. He died at his Castle of Argenton in 1509, and was regretted as one of the most profound statesmen, and certainly the best historian, of his age. In a poem to his memory by the poet Ronsard, he received the distinguished praise, that he was the first to show the lustre which valour and noble blood derived from being united with learning.

Note 19, p. 281

The heralds of the middle ages, like the *feciales* of the Romans, were invested with a character which was held almost sacred. To strike a herald was a crime which inferred a capital punishment; and to counterfeit the character of such an august official was a degree of treason towards those men who were accounted the depositaries of the secrets of monarchs and the honour of nobles. Yet a prince so unscrupulous as Louis XI did not hesitate to practise such an imposition, when he wished to enter into communication with Edward IV of England.

Exercising that knowledge of mankind for which he was so eminent, he selected, as an agent fit for his purpose, a simple valet. This man, whose address had been known to him, he disguised as a herald, with all the insignia of his office, and sent him in that capacity to open a communication with the English army. Two things are remarkable in this transaction. First, that the stratagem, though of so fraudulent a nature, does not seem to have been necessarily called for, since all that King Louis could gain by it would be, that he did not commit himself by sending a more responsible messenger. The other circumstance worthy of notice is, that Comines though he mentions the affair at great length, is so pleased with the King's shrewdness in selecting, and dexterity at indoctrinating, his pseudo-herald, that he forgets all remark on the impudence and fraud of the imposition, as well as the great risk of discovery; from both which circumstances we are led to the

conclusion, that the solemn character which the heralds endeavoured to arrogate to themselves had already begun to lose regard among statesmen and men of the great world.

Even Ferne, zealous enough for the dignity of the herald, seems to impute this intrusion on their rights in some degree to necessity.

'I have heard some,' he says, 'but with shame enough, allow of the action of Louis XI of the kingdom of France, who had so unknightly a regard both of his own honour and also of armes, that he seldom had about his court any officer-at-armes. And therefore, at such time as Edward IV, King of England, had entered France with a hostile power, and lay before the town of St. Quentin, the same French king, for want of a herald to carry his mind to the English king, was constrained to suborn a vadelict, or common serving-man, with a trumpet-banner, having a hole made through the middest for this preposterous herauld to put his head through, and to cast it over his shoulders instead of a better coat-armour of France. And thus came this hastily-arrayed courier as a counterfeit officer-at-armes, with instructions from his sovereign's mouth to offer peace to our king. "Well," replies Torquatus, the other interlocutor in the dialogue, "that fault was never yet to be seen in any of our English kings, nor ever shall be, I hope."' — Ferne's *Blazen of Gentry*, 1586, p. 161.

In this curious book, the author, besides some assertions in favour of coat-armour, too nearly approaching blasphemy to be quoted, informs us that the Apostles were gentlemen of blood, and many of them descended from that worthy conqueror, Judas Maccabæus; but through the course of time and persecution of wars, poverty oppressed the kindred, and they were constrained to servile works. So were the four doctors and fathers of the church (Ambrose, Augustine, Hierome, and Gregorie) gentlemen both of blood and arms (p. 98). The Author's copy of this rare tract (memorial of a hopeful young friend, now no more [1]) exhibits a curious sally of the national and professional irritability of a Scottish herald.

This person appears to have been named Thomas Drysdale, Islay Herald, who purchased the volume in 1619, and seems to have perused it with patience and profit till he came to the following passage in Ferne, which enters into the distinction between sovereign and feudatory crowns. 'There is also a king, and he

[1] Mr. Thomas Shortreed, who died in 1826, eldest son of the Author's old friend, the sheriff-substitute of Roxburghshire.

a homager, or fœdatorie to the estate and majestie of another king, as to his superior lord, as that of Scotland to our English empire.' This assertion set on fire the Scottish blood of Islay Herald, who, forgetting the book had been printed nearly forty years before, and that the author was probably dead, writes on the margin in great wrath, and in a half-text hand, 'He is a traitor and lyar in his throat, and I offer him the combat, that says Scotland's kings were ever feudatorie to England.'

Note 20, p. 308

The perilling of the hand of an heiress upon the event of a battle was not so likely to take place in the fourteenth century as when the laws of chivalry were in more general observance. Yet it was not unlikely to occur to so absolute a prince as Duke Charles, in circumstances like those supposed.

Note 21, p. 312

It is almost unnecessary to add, that the marriage of William de la Marck with the Lady Hameline is as apocryphal as the lady herself. The real bride of the Wild Boar of Ardennes was Joan D'Arschel, Baroness of Schoonhoven.

Note 22, p. 322

The Duke of Burgundy, full of resentment for the usage which the bishop had received from the people of Liege (whose death, as already noticed, did not take place for some years after), and knowing that the walls of the town had not been repaired since they were breached by himself after the battle of St. Tron, advanced recklessly to their chastisement. His commanders shared his presumptuous confidence; for the advanced guard of his army, under the Maréchal of Burgundy and Seigneur D'Hymbercourt, rushed upon one of the suburbs, without waiting for the rest of their army, which, commanded by the Duke in person, remained about seven or eight leagues in the rear. The night was closing, and, as the Burgundian troops observed no discipline, they were exposed to a sudden attack from a party of the citizens commanded by Jean de Vilde, who, assaulting them in front and rear, threw them into great disorder, and killed more than eight hundred men, of whom one hundred were men-at-arms.

When Charles and the King of France came up, they took up

their quarters in two villas situated near to the wall of the city. In the two or three days which followed, Louis was distinguished for the quiet and regulated composure with which he pressed the siege, and provided for defence in case of sallies; while the Duke of Burgundy, no way deficient in courage, and who showed the rashness and want of order which was his principal characteristic, seemed also extremely suspicious that the King would desert him and join with the Liegeois.

They lay before the town for five or six days, and at length fixed the 30th of October 1468 for a general storm. The citizens, who had probably information of their intent, resolved to prevent their purpose, and determined on anticipating it by a desperate sally through the breaches in their walls. They placed at their head six hundred of the men of the little territory of Franchemont, belonging to the bishopric of Liege, and reckoned the most valiant of their troops. They burst out of the town on a sudden, surprised the Duke of Burgundy's quarters ere his guards could put on their armour, which they had laid off to enjoy some repose before the assault. The King of France's lodgings were also attacked and endangered. A great confusion ensued, augmented incalculably by the mutual jealousy and suspicions of the French and Burgundians. The people of Liege were, however, unable to maintain their hardy enterprise, when the men-at-arms of the King and Duke began to recover from their confusion, and were finally forced to retire within their walls, after narrowly missing the chance of surprising both King Louis and the Duke of Burgundy, the most powerful princes of their time. At daybreak the storm took place, as had been originally intended, and the citizens, disheartened and fatigued by the nocturnal sally, did not make so much resistance as was expected. Liege was taken and miserably pillaged, without regard to sex or age, things sacred or things profane. These particulars are fully related by Comines in his *Memoirs*, liv. ii. chaps. 11, 12, 13, and do not differ much from the account of the same events given in the text.

Note 23, p. 339

We have already noticed the anachronism respecting the crimes of this atrocious baron; and it is scarce necessary to repeat, that if he in reality murdered the Bishop of Liege in 1482, the Count of La Marck could not be slain in the defence of Liege four years earlier. In fact, the Wild Boar of Ardennes, as he was usually

termed, was of high birth, being the third son of John I, Count of La Marck and Aremberg, and ancestor of the branch called Barons of Lumain. He did not escape the punishment due to his atrocity, though it did not take place at the time, or in the manner, narrated in the text. Maximilian, Emperor of Austria, caused him to be arrested at Utrecht, where he was beheaded in the year 1485, three years after the Bishop of Liege's death.

Note 24, p. 340

An old rhyme, by which the Leslies vindicate their descent from an ancient knight who is said to have slain a gigantic Hungarian champion, and to have formed a proper name for himself, by a play of words upon the place where he fought his adversary.

GLOSSARY

accidence, rudiments, first principles.
appanage, provision made for the maintenance of younger children of kings, princes, etc.
aroint, begone.
assoil, to acquit, to pardon.

ban and arrière-ban, the entire feudal force.
bauble, a baton carried by the court fool as a mock emblem of office.
bavaroise, a drink sweetened with orange-flower syrup.
blackjack, a leather tankard or drinking vessel.
blate, bashful, stupid.
bonny, pretty, fine.
bottrine, a small leather flask.
brach, a hound that hunts by scent.
brantwein, brandy.
braw, brave.
braw-warld, showy, gaudy.
buff-coat, a stout coat of buff leather.
bushment, an ambush.

callant, a boy, a stripling.
carcanet, a necklace.
cast, an example, a specimen.
catchpoll, an officer who arrests for debt.
certes, faith!
chares, household work.
chield, a fellow.
chiromantist, one who tells fortunes by the hand.
cocagne, an imaginary country.
coif, a woman's cap or other head covering.
colin maillard, blind man's buff.
combust, an astrological term for a planet that is too near the sun.
corslet, a piece of defensive armour covering the body.
couchée, an evening reception, going to bed.
culverin, an ancient small cannon.
curney, a number, a company.

daffing, loose talk.
darioles, pastry cakes containing cream.
demi-solde, half pay.
doddered, covered with twining parasites.
donjon, the innermost keep of a castle.
duffle, a coarse woollen cloth.
dyes, dies, toys, gewgaws.

ephemerides, an astronomical almanac.
ethnic, pagan.

faitour, a traitor, a rascal.
fourrier, an advance messenger.
frampold, unruly, peevish.

gabelle, a tax, especially a salt-tax.
gaberdine, a loose upper garment of coarse material.
gear, affair, business.
ghaist, a ghost.
gossip, a familiar friend.
groat, an old coin worth 4 *d.* or less.
guerdon, a reward.
guilder, a gold coin worth about 1 *s.* 8 *d.*

halberd, a combination of spear and battle-axe.
halidome, honour.
hanap, an old word for cup.
handsel, a gift, earnest-money.
harquebuss, an ancient firelock.
hawk-purse, a bag worn by a falconer.
Henri Quatre coat, a tight-fitting garment terminating just below the waist.
hermetical philosophy, a system ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus, i.e., the god Thoth, the traditional author of Egyptian culture.

hors de page, to be, to have finished serving one's apprenticeship as a page.
howlet, an owl.

ilk, each.

jerkin, a jacket.

ken, know.
knave, a boy, a servant.
Knight without fear and reproach, the chevalier Bayard.
kürschner, a furrier.

lanzknecht, a spearman.
leading-staff, a staff carried by a commanding officer, a truncheon.
lire, a pint.
list, please, wish.
loom, an implement, an open vessel of any kind.
lurdane, a blockhead.

malapert, impertinent.
meikle, much.
mell, meddle, join in battle.
minting, aiming.
morion, a kind of helmet without beaver or visor.
mumble, chew gently.
murrain, a plague.

oriel, a projecting window in an upper story.
ounce, the common lynx or other small feline beast.

palmer, a pilgrim.
partizan, a pike.
pasques-Dieu, the favorite oath of Louis XI.
plack, an old Scotch coin worth about $\frac{1}{3}$ *d.*
poll, despoil, pillage.
poortith, poverty.
postern-door, a side or private door.
pow, the head.
prime, the first hour of the day.
pursuivant, an officer-at-arms of relatively low rank, a warrant-officer.

quack-salving, pertaining to quackery.

rakehelly, dissolute.
rocket, rochet, a loose frock or cloak.
rouse, a draught, a bumper.
routier, an undisciplined soldier.
runagate, a renegade, a fugitive, an outlaw.

saker, an old form of cannon formerly much used in sieges and on ships.
saus and braus, revelry.
schelm, a rogue.
schwarzbier, black beer.
schwarzreiter, a black trooper, a light-cavalryman.
seneschal, a steward, a superintendent of domestic ceremonies.
shool, a shovel.
shot-hole, a loop-hole.
souter, a cobbler.
stadt-house, a town house.
stave and tail, in bear baiting, checking the bear with a staff and holding the dog back by the tail.
stiver, a small Dutch coin.
suzerain, a feudal lord, a lord paramount.

tabard, a coat with short sleeves (or none) worn by heralds and pursuivants.
table-diamond, a diamond whose flat upper surface has the appearance of a slab or plate.
tauridor, a bull fighter.
thrall, a serf.
trunk-hose, large breeches reaching to the knee.

wassail, ale or wine spiced; also, a festival.
weel, well.
wench, a young woman.
whillywhaw, to talk in a kindly and cajoling way.
wight, strong.
wot, know.

yungfrau, jungfrau, a young woman.

zuchthaus, a prison.

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